ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODIES

ISSUE SEVEN
$3.50
ADULT READERS ONLY

Associated Student Bodies

Issue 7

Story by Lance Rund

Art by Chris McKinley

ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODIES

ONE MORE TO GO!

The light at the end of the tunnel... let's just hope it's not an oncoming train.

People have been asking what we plan to do after the regular series is over. We have plans for a Special (an oversized issue consisting of a bunch of "backup" stories), a spin-off (remember Coyote Rose?), and a couple of other things we won't talk about just yet. Fear not, ASB isn't going to dry up and blow away!

CRUELTY AND KINDNESS

Read the issue. Done that? Okay, onwards...

Some of our readers wrote, expressing concern about what Daniel would find when he returned. The speculations were, in some cases, very ugly. Rest assured, we have no intention of destroying our friends in the A.S.B. cast.

WHO'S THAT?

We have a guest! Scot Zellman's "Buster Wilde" is an outrageously funny comic strip about a queer werewolf... straight and human by day, gay and wolfy by night. "Buster Wilde" is well worth your time... check him out online at:

http://www.geocities.com/~buster_wilde

WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE?

One more regular issue, one Special, and one long vacation! We are going to take a little extra time between issue 7 and issue 8, so look for something around the end of the year.

THE WEB. CAN'T ESCAPE IT.

Can't wait for issue 8? There's stuff to be had at:

http://www.arclight.net/asb

See you soon!

Lance Rund
Chris McKinley

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LE ROI ES MORTE. VIVE LE ROI.

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Associated Student Bodies

Story by Lance Rund
Art by Chris McKinley

MARCUS..?
DANIEL, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I WAS SCARED OUT OF MY MIND!
I... NEVER MIND, ARE YOU OKAY?
PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T EVER RUN AWAY FROM ME AGAIN! I'M SO SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED!
SHH... IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY... IT'S ALL RIGHT...
SNIFF I THOUGHT I'D LOST YOU FOREVER. I LOST MY SELF-CONTROL...
WE BOTH DID.
WHAT'S THIS?
PAINKILLER. DOESN'T WORK ANY MORE, THOUGH.

SOMETHING I HAD A PROBLEM WITH WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. GUESS I'M NOT OVER IT YET.

MARCUS, DON'T PUNISH YOURSELF... YOU'VE SUFFERED TOO MUCH ALREADY!

NO, I HAVEN'T.

I HURT SOMEONE I LOVE.

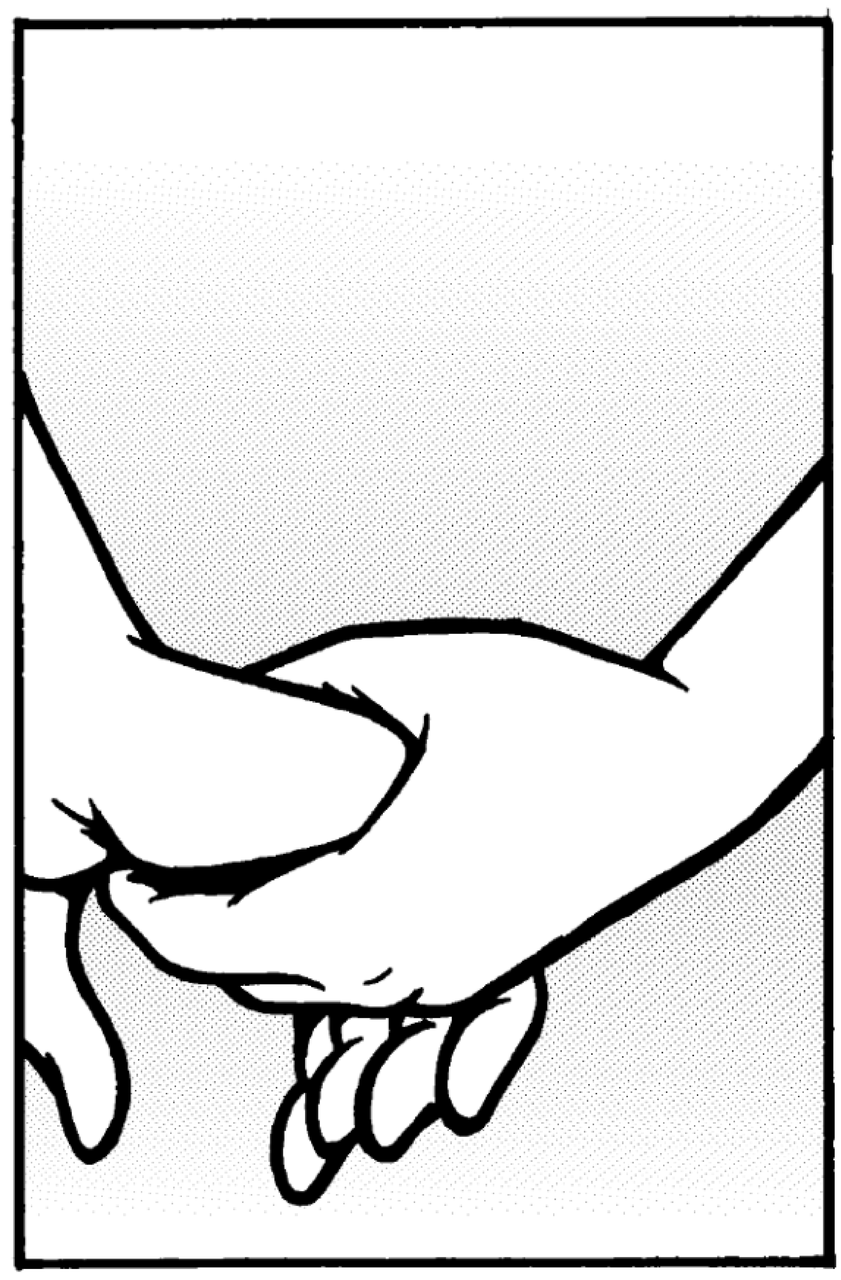
WE NEED TO TALK.

YEAH.

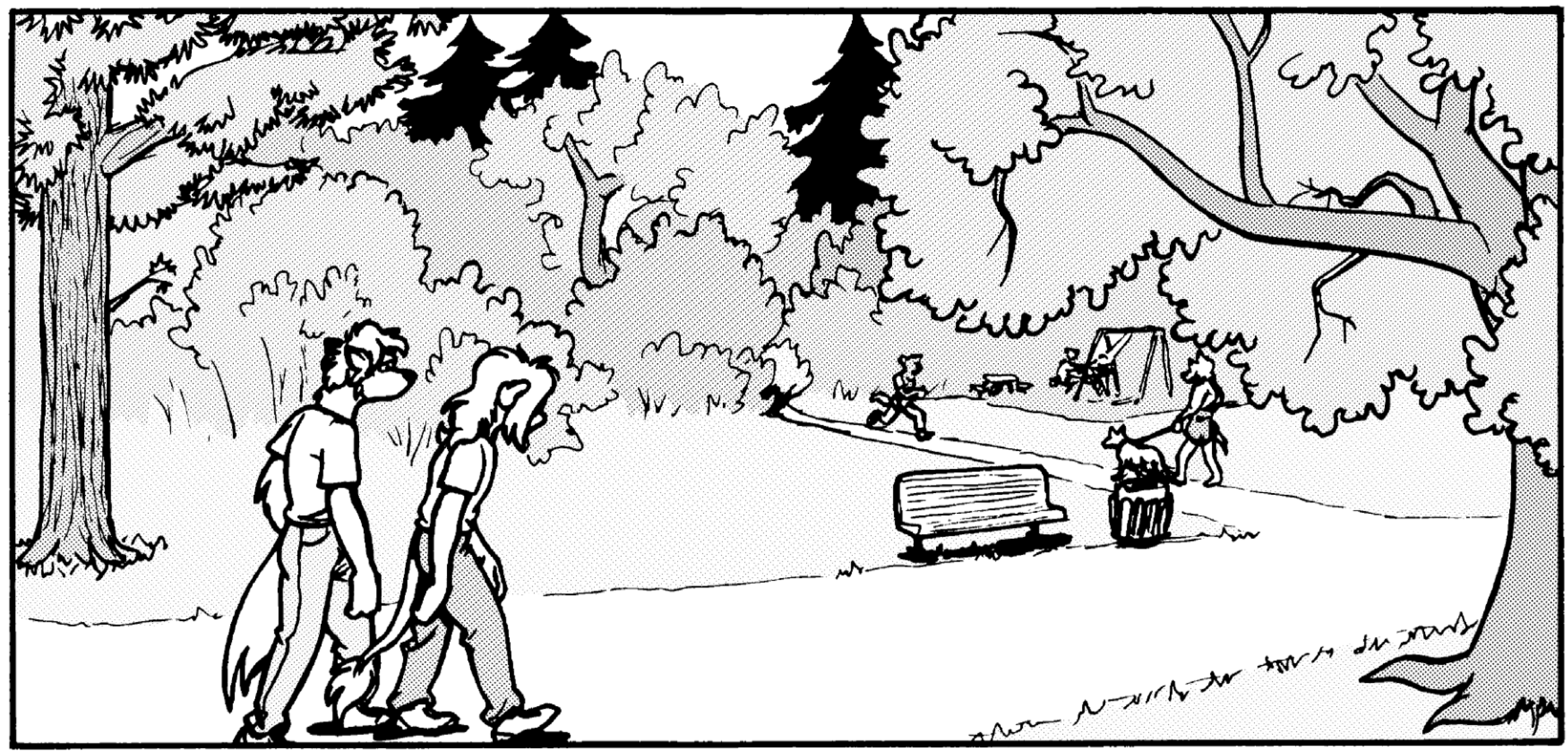
NOT HERE, THOUGH. I DON'T WANT TO BE IN HERE RIGHT NOW.

YOU OKAY TO WALK?

YEAH... I'M SOBER, JUST REALLY HUNG OVER.

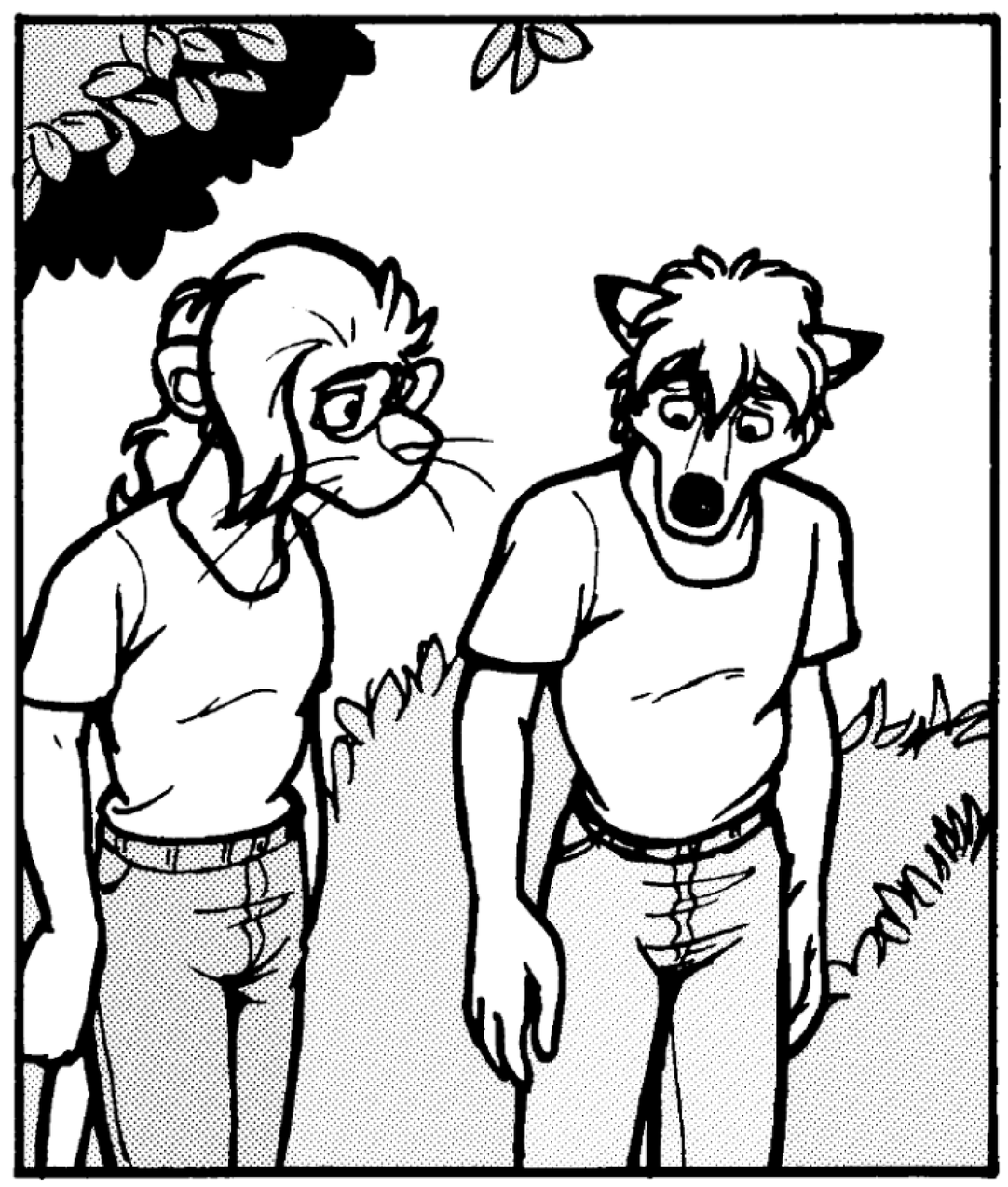


DO YOU THINK THEY'LL BE OKAY?
GOD, I HOPE SO.



WE CAN'T LET THIS HAPPEN AGAIN.
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.
I PLAN ON AVOIDING YOUR FATHER.

I MEAN "US". OUR RELATIONSHIP. I DON'T THINK IT CAN KEEP GOING LIKE THIS.



I'LL MOVE OUT, IF YOU WANT...
NO, I DON'T WANT! THINGS HAVE TO CHANGE, NOT END!

THIS IS EXACTLY THE PROBLEM... YOU ASSUMED YOU KNEW WHAT I WANTED, AND ACTED ON IT!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO, I JUST THOUGHT--

DO YOU WANT US TO STAY TOGETHER?
YOU KNOW I DO!

SO FAR, THINGS HAVE GONE PRETTY MUCH THE WAY YOU'VE WANTED. YOU STARTED THINGS. YOU ALWAYS TAKE THE LEAD. YOU'VE ASSUMED AN AWFUL LOT.
BUT YOU NEVER SAID YOU DIDN'T LIKE WHAT WAS HAPPENING...

WELL, YES. YOU ALWAYS ASK IF WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS OKAY, BUT IT'S ALWAYS YOU MAKING THE CHOICES. I CAN'T ASK, I CAN ONLY ANSWER. THINGS HAVE WORKED OUT... BUT HOW MUCH OF THAT IS JUST LUCK?
I ONLY WANTED TO MAKE YOU HAPPY!

YOU'VE SHOWN ME SOME WONDERFUL TIMES... PUSHED ME INTO THE ARMS OF SOME WONDERFUL PEOPLE. YOU'VE OPENED SO MANY DOORS IN MY LIFE...

BUT IT'S NEVER BEEN AS EQUALS. YOU'VE BEEN ENTIRELY IN CHARGE.
I NEVER STOPPED TO THINK.
I KNOW. THAT'S THE PROBLEM.

I CAN'T BE YOUR PET ANY MORE.

THAT'S NOT HOW I THINK OF YOU!
BUT THAT'S HOW I FEEL. LIKE A WELL-LOVED PET.

IF WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A FUTURE TOGETHER, IT'S AS EQUALS. WE HAVE TO MAKE A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER.
I'D DO ANYTHING FOR YOU...

JUST LOVE ME, LIKE I LOVE YOU. DON'T EVER LET GO...

GOD, I'VE CRIED MORE IN THE PAST COUPLE OF DAYS THAN IN MY WHOLE LIFETIME.
"TITANIC" THERAPY...
IT'S GOOD FOR YOU, ONCE IN A WHILE.

YOUR TURN TO MAKE THE RULES.

ALL RIGHT... NO MORE USING ME AS A PRIZE! EVEN IF DAVID NEEDS TO BE PUT IN HIS PLACE!
AGREED!

AND NO SLEEPING WITH OTHER GUYS... NOT UNLESS WE TALK ABOUT IT FIRST, ANYWAY.
THAT'S FAIR. BESIDES, MORE LION FOR ME THAT WAY!

AND WE TALK. REALLY TALK. ABOUT THE IMPORTANT STUFF. WE CAN'T BOTTLE ANYTHING UP.

PRACTICE.

I'VE NEVER BEEN GOOD AT TALKING ABOUT MY FEELINGS.

I WOULDN'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN.

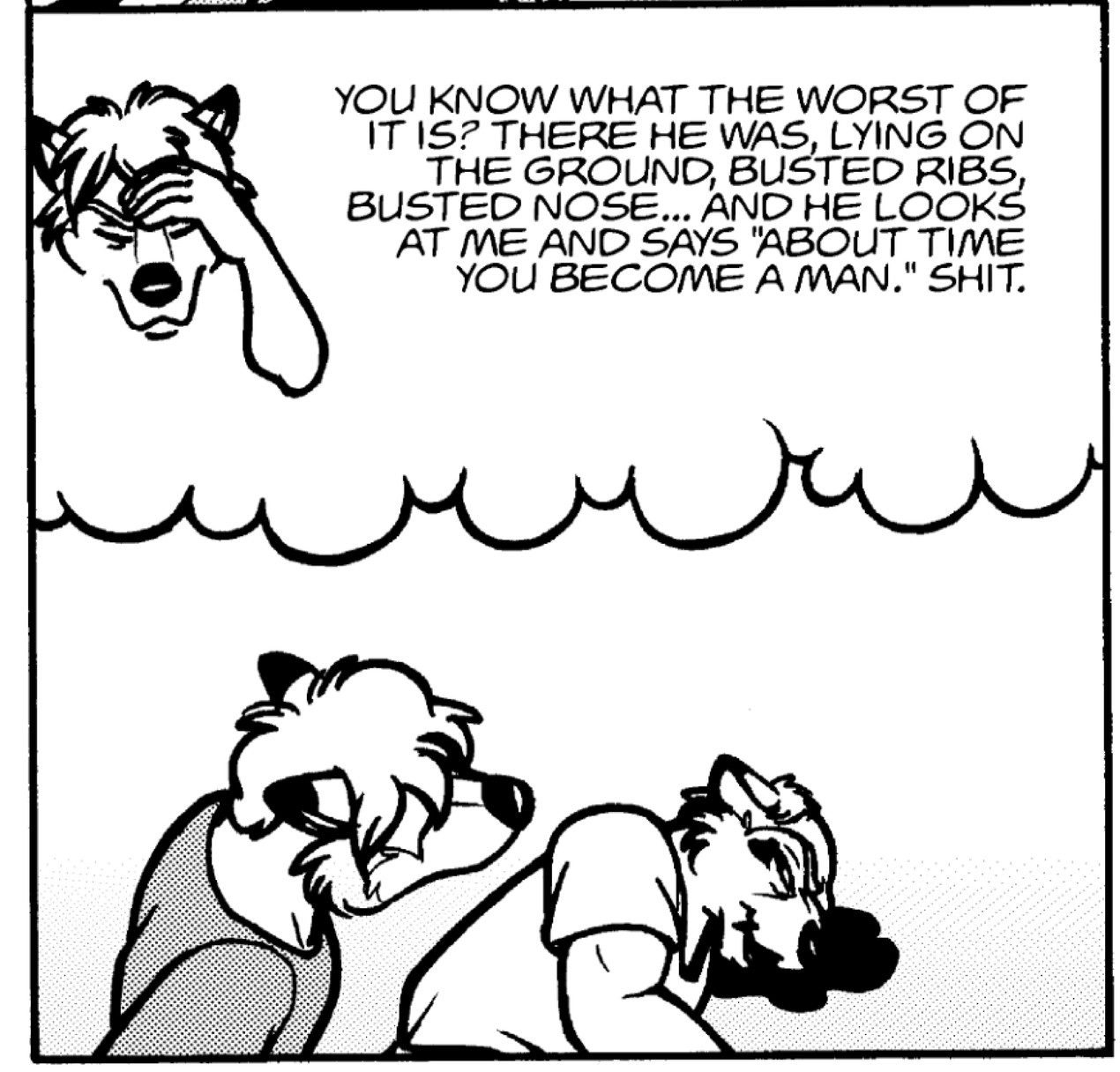
WELL, YOU COULD START BY TELLING ME WHY YOU LOST IT YESTERDAY.

YOU'RE RIGHT... YOU DESERVE TO KNOW.

I TOLD YOU ABOUT MY OLD MAN, RIGHT? GOOD FOR NOTHING, COULDN'T HOLD A JOB, TOOK IT ALL OUT ON ME. MOM DIED WHEN I WAS LITTLE. DAD COULDN'T HANDLE IT.

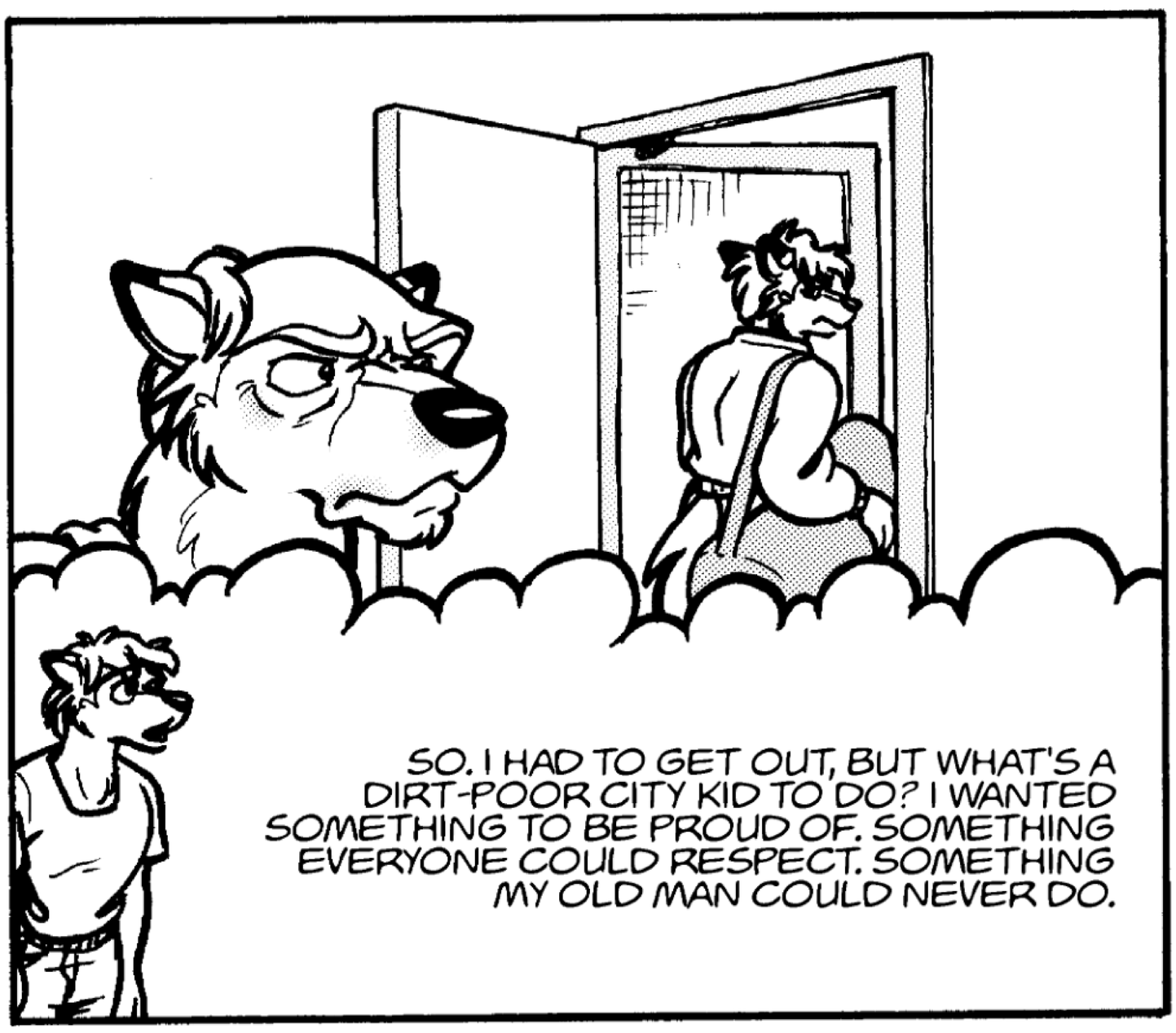
ONE DAY, I JUST COULDN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE. HE HIT ME, AND I HIT HIM BACK. HARD. CHRIST, I BEAT THE LIVING SHIT OUT OF HIM... A LIFETIME OF ANGER, AND IT ALL CAME OUT AT ONCE.

JEEZE... SOUNDS FAMILIAR.
YEAH...

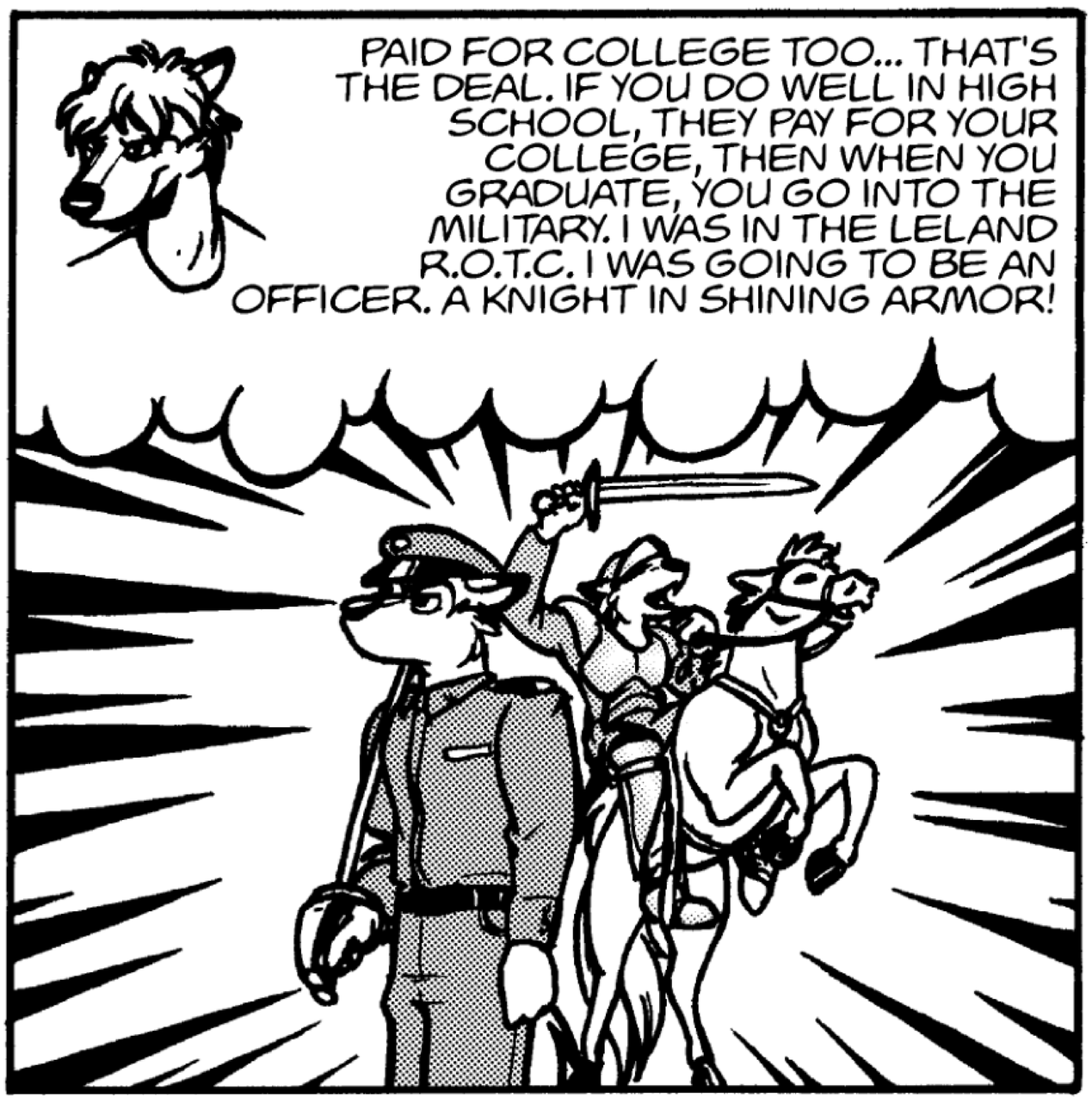

YOU KNOW WHAT THE WORST OF IT IS? THERE HE WAS, LYING ON THE GROUND, BUSTED RIBS, BUSTED NOSE... AND HE LOOKS AT ME AND SAYS "ABOUT TIME YOU BECOME A MAN." SHIT.

THAT WAS WHAT A MAN WAS? DRUNK AND VIOLENT? I WAS BECOMING JUST LIKE HIM, AND HE ADMIRED IT! ASSHOLE...
YOU'RE NOTHING LIKE THAT!

BUT I COULD BE. SO EASILY. JUST ONE SLIP... LIKE YESTERDAY.
WE BOTH SLIPPED.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT OKAY.


SO. I HAD TO GET OUT, BUT WHAT'S A DIRT-POOR CITY KID TO DO? I WANTED SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF. SOMETHING EVERYONE COULD RESPECT. SOMETHING MY OLD MAN COULD NEVER DO.

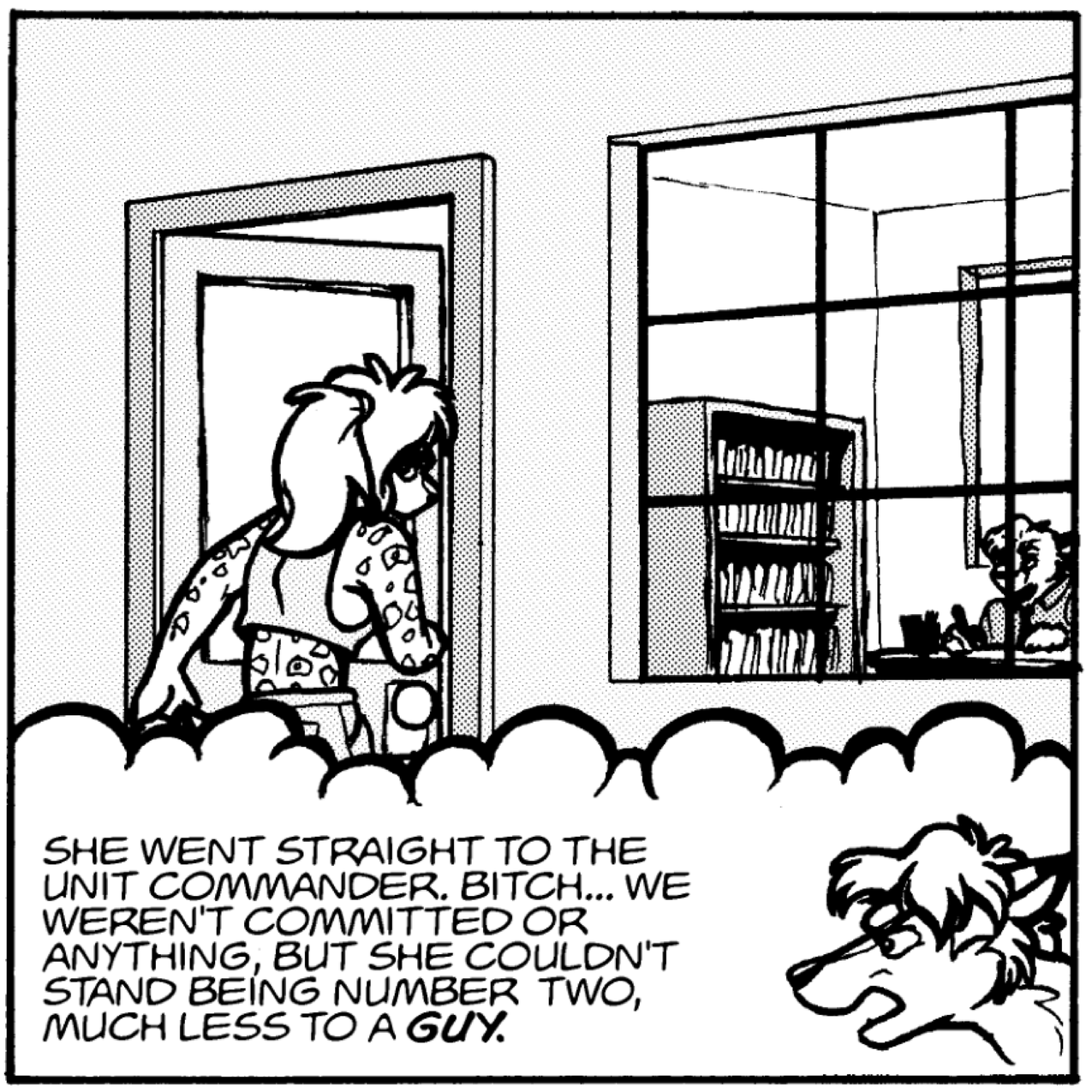
I'D ALWAYS ADMIRED PEOPLE IN THE MILITARY. THEY PUT IT ALL ON THE LINE TO DEFEND US... SO I JOINED THE R.O.T.C.* IN MY HIGH SCHOOL. THEY TAUGHT ME SELF-CONTROL, AND SELF-RESPECT.
* R.O.T.C = RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS.

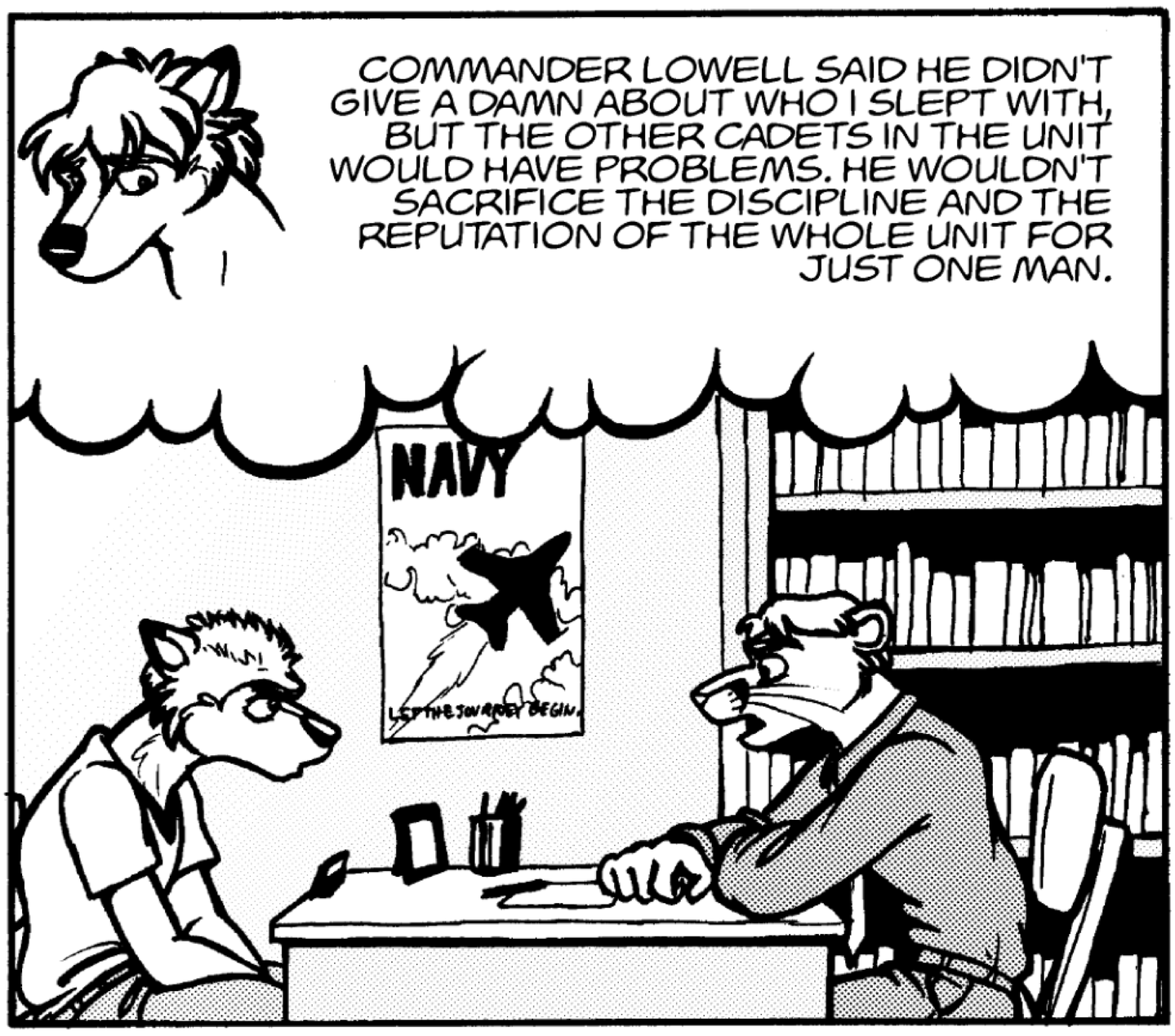

PAID FOR COLLEGE TOO... THAT'S THE DEAL. IF YOU DO WELL IN HIGH SCHOOL, THEY PAY FOR YOUR COLLEGE, THEN WHEN YOU GRADUATE, YOU GO INTO THE MILITARY. I WAS IN THE LELAND R.O.T.C. I WAS GOING TO BE AN OFFICER. A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR!

YOU DON'T SEE ME IN UNIFORM, THOUGH.
WHAT HAPPENED?

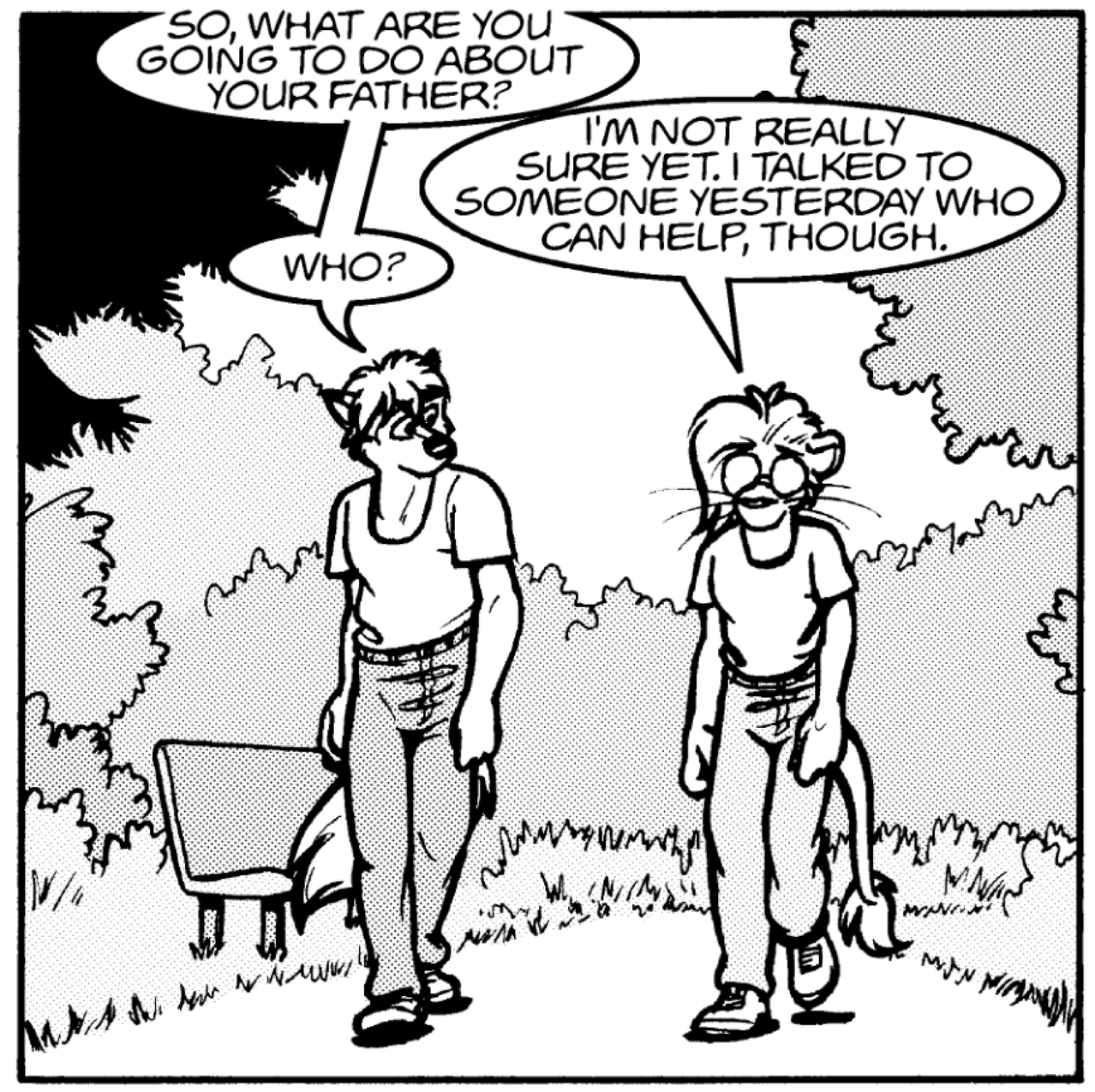
WHAT ELSE? THROWN OUT... I WAS DOING SO WELL. BUT THERE WAS A PROBLEM... YOU SEE, I WAS SEEING A GIRL. SHE WAS REALLY BEAUTIFUL, AND SHE KNEW IT. VAIN, AND AS SHALLOW AS A PUDDLE. SO I WAS MESSING AROUND ON THE SIDE.

WITH ANOTHER CADET, NO LESS. HE WASN'T MY FIRST GUY, BUT DAMMIT, HE WAS SPECIAL. HE AND I WERE... CLOSE. AND MY GIRLFRIEND FOUND OUT. I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SEEING TWO PEOPLE, BUT I STILL HAD A LOT OF STUPIDITY IN ME.

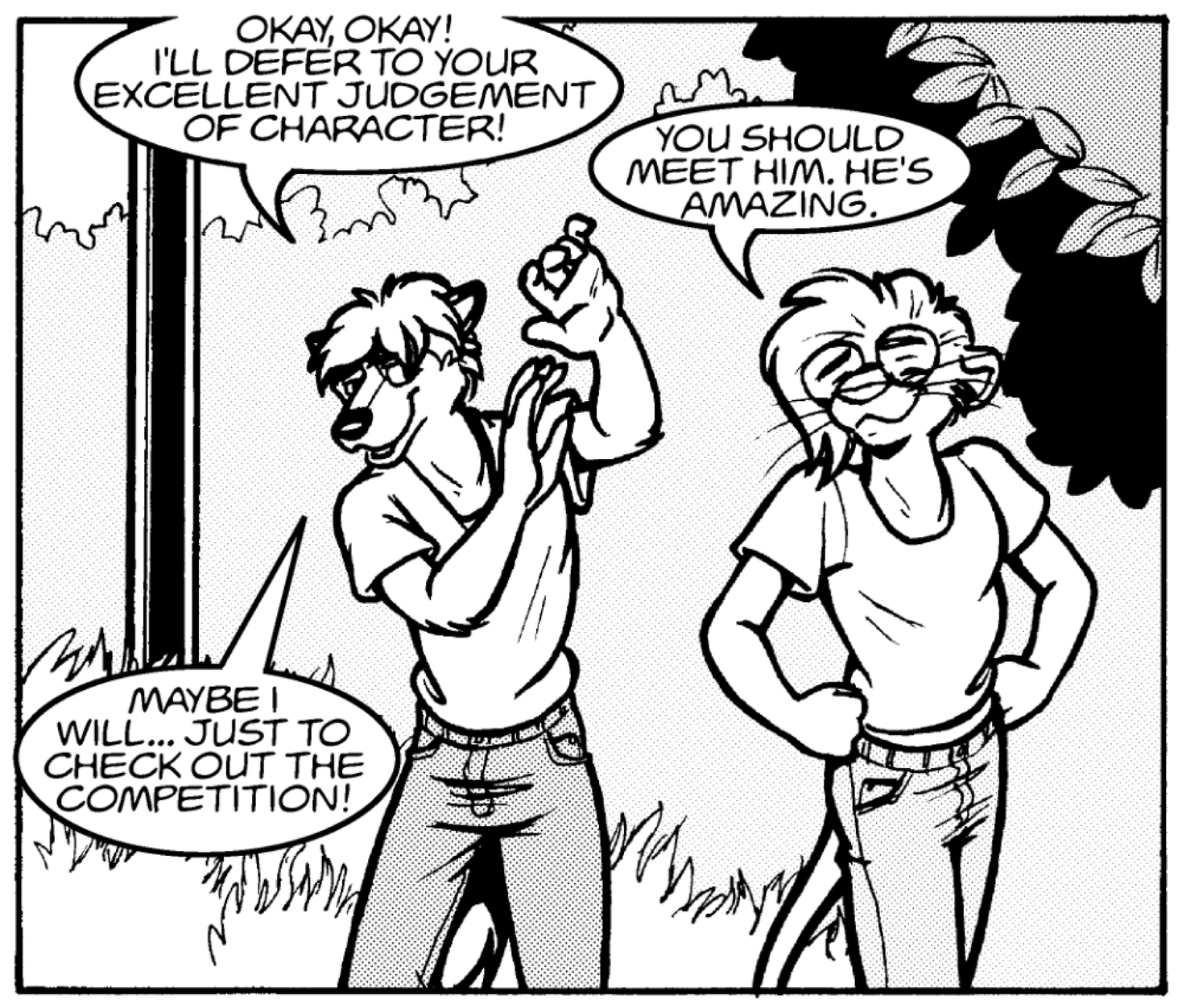

SHE WENT STRAIGHT TO THE UNIT COMMANDER. BITCH... WE WEREN'T COMMITTED OR ANYTHING, BUT SHE COULDN'T STAND BEING NUMBER TWO, MUCH LESS TO A GUY.



* ANNAPOLIS IS WHERE THE U.S. NAVY ACADEMY IS LOCATED


SO, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT YOUR FATHER?
WHO?
I'M NOT REALLY SURE YET. I TALKED TO SOMEONE YESTERDAY WHO CAN HELP, THOUGH.

OH, GREAT.
A PRIEST...
NOW DON'T GO MAKING FACES! HE'S A REALLY NICE GUY!


OKAY, OKAY! I'LL DEFER TO YOUR EXCELLENT JUDGEMENT OF CHARACTER!
YOU SHOULD MEET HIM. HE'S AMAZING.
MAYBE I WILL... JUST TO CHECK OUT THE COMPETITION!

LETCH!
JUST KIDDING!
SWAT

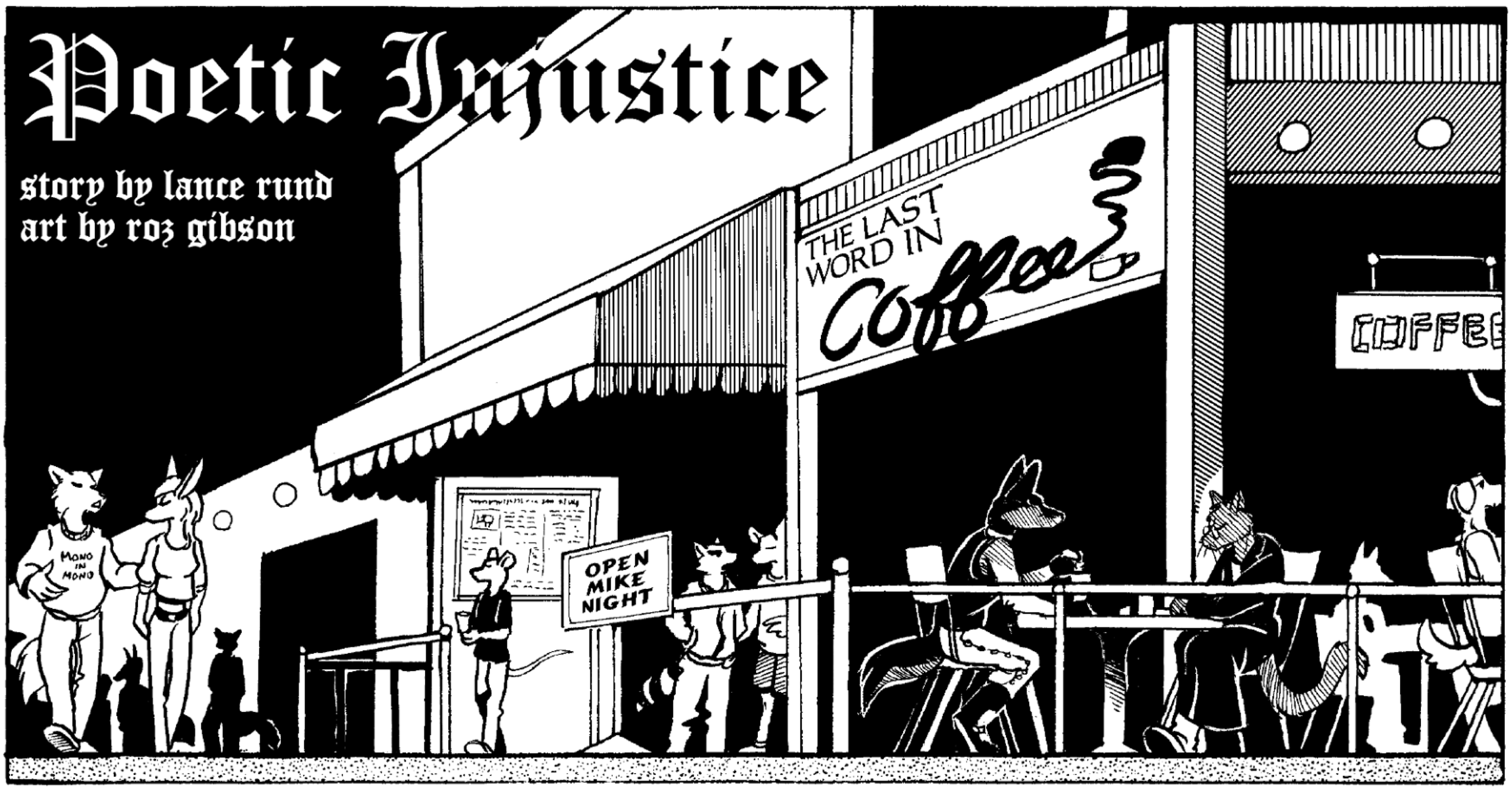
SO, ARE WE OFFICIALLY KISSED-AND-MADE-UP?
O-FFICIALLY!

LET'S GO HOME... WE BOTH NEED SOME REAL SLEEP.
I DEMAND IT!
CAN I STILL MAKE YOU MY TEDDY-LION?
YES, SIR!

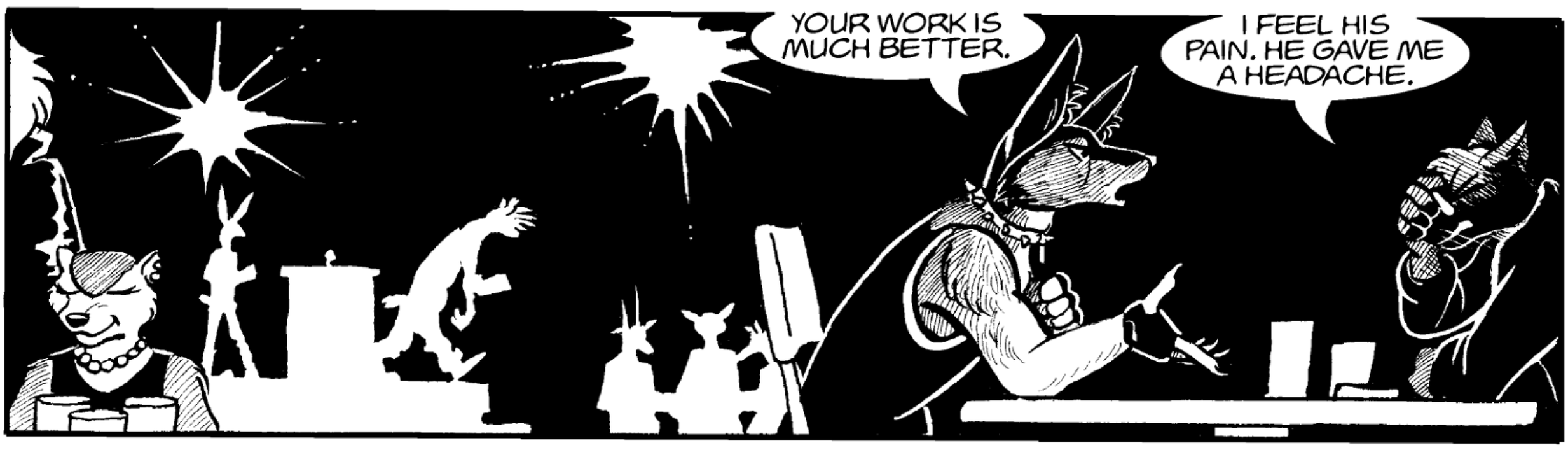
END.

Poetic Injustice

story by lance rund
art by roz gibson



"...AND THE ROSE'S THORNS PRICK ME, MAKE ME BLEED. MY HEART IS RUINED. YES, INDEED."


YOUR WORK IS MUCH BETTER.
I FEEL HIS PAIN. HE GAVE ME A HEADACHE.

THAT WAS... COOL. OKAY, WHO'S GOING TO TAKE US IN A NEW DIRECTION?
GO FOR IT. MAKE US CRY.

LET'S HEAR THE WORD OF...
GERALD ANTON.
MASTER ANTON!

BORED FOR WANT OF PAIN
NOT ENOUGH DEMONS IN YOUR DREAMS
INVENT SOME.
SHADOWS CAN BE MADE REAL
IF YOU KILL IN THEIR NAME

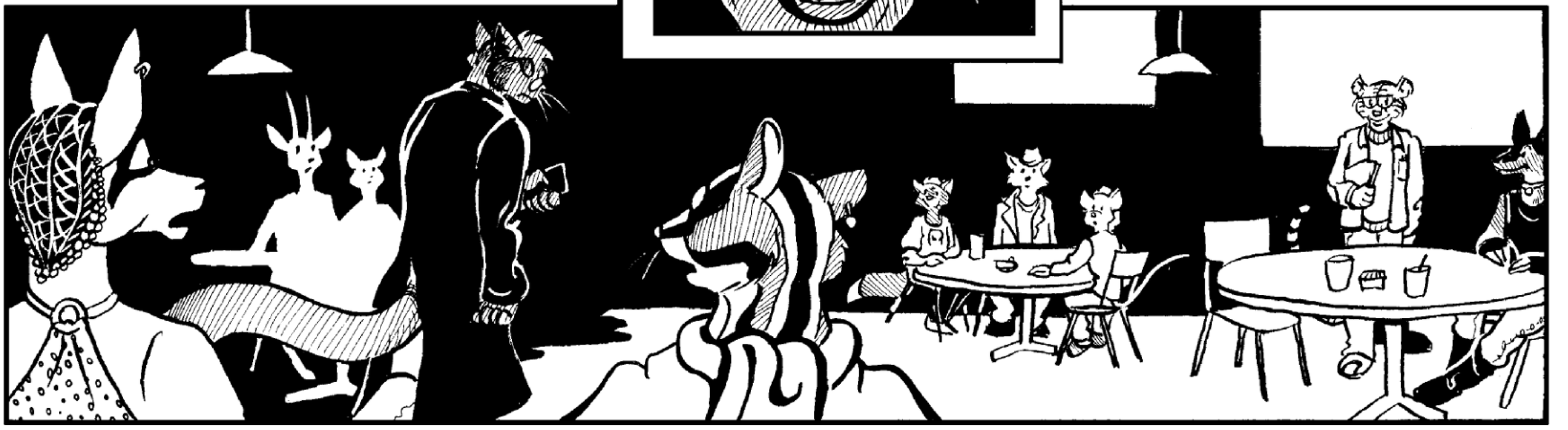
SHADES OF GREY THREATEN CERTAINTY
A DULLED RAZOR SLITS FEW WRISTS
UNACCEPTABLE!
SHARPEN ME UPON YOUR AUTHORITY
AND NAME YOURSELF AS ENEMY

WAR DRUMS MADE FROM
CHILDREN'S SKINS
BEATEN WITH THEIR BONES
PASS YOUR SINS TO THE UNBORN
COMMIT THEM TO YOUR GOD
SO THEY CAN BURN IN YOUR PLACE

REAP THE REWARDS OF YOUR VIRTUES
COLLECTED ON SCYTHES OF UNBENDING THOUGHT
WORDS TURN INTO BLADES AND BULLETS
AND HARVEST TEARS AND PAIN

THE SWORD CUTS IN ALL WAYS
AND YOU ACT SO SURPRISED
THE DEMONS YOU'VE TAKEN TO BED
SOMEDAY
TURN ON YOU

SOMEDAY. TODAY.
WELCOME HOME, FATHER.

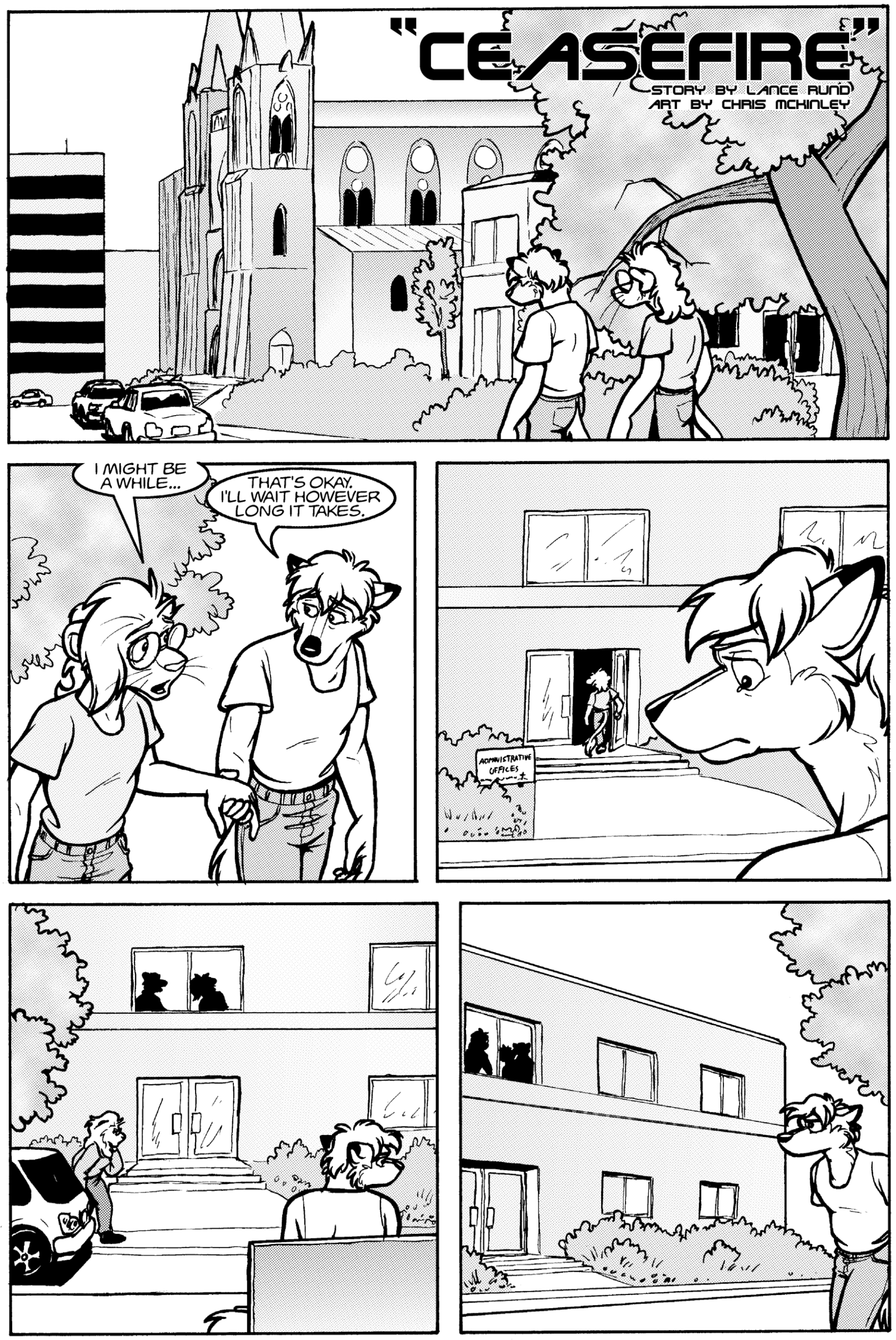


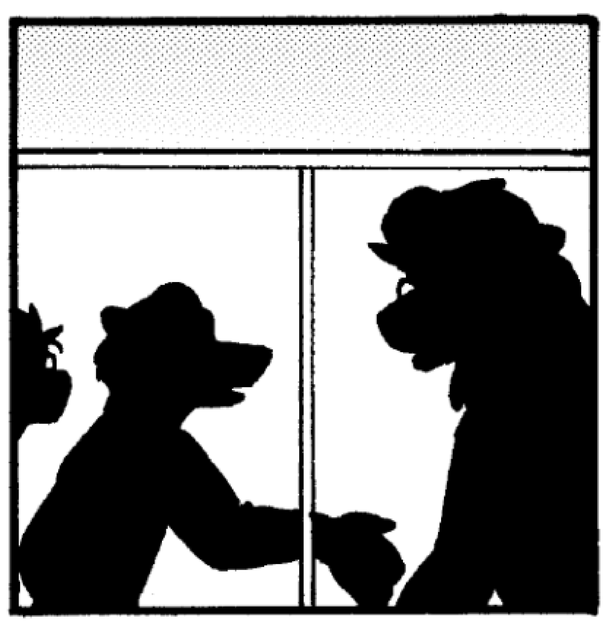
END.

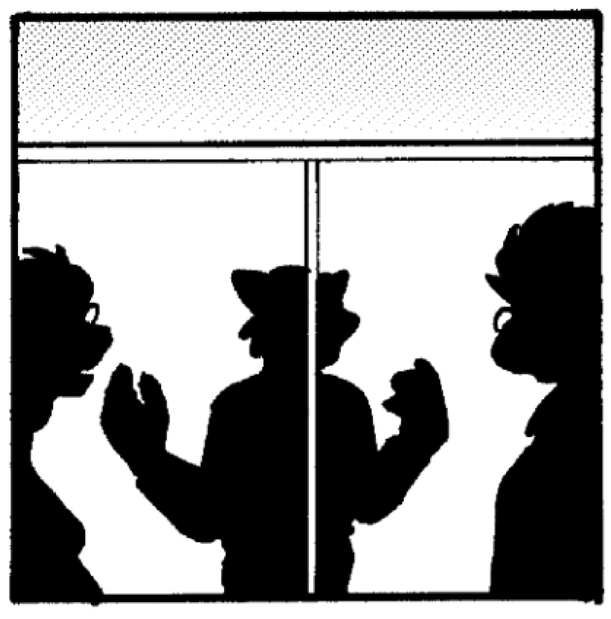
Gibson '99

"CEASEFIRE"

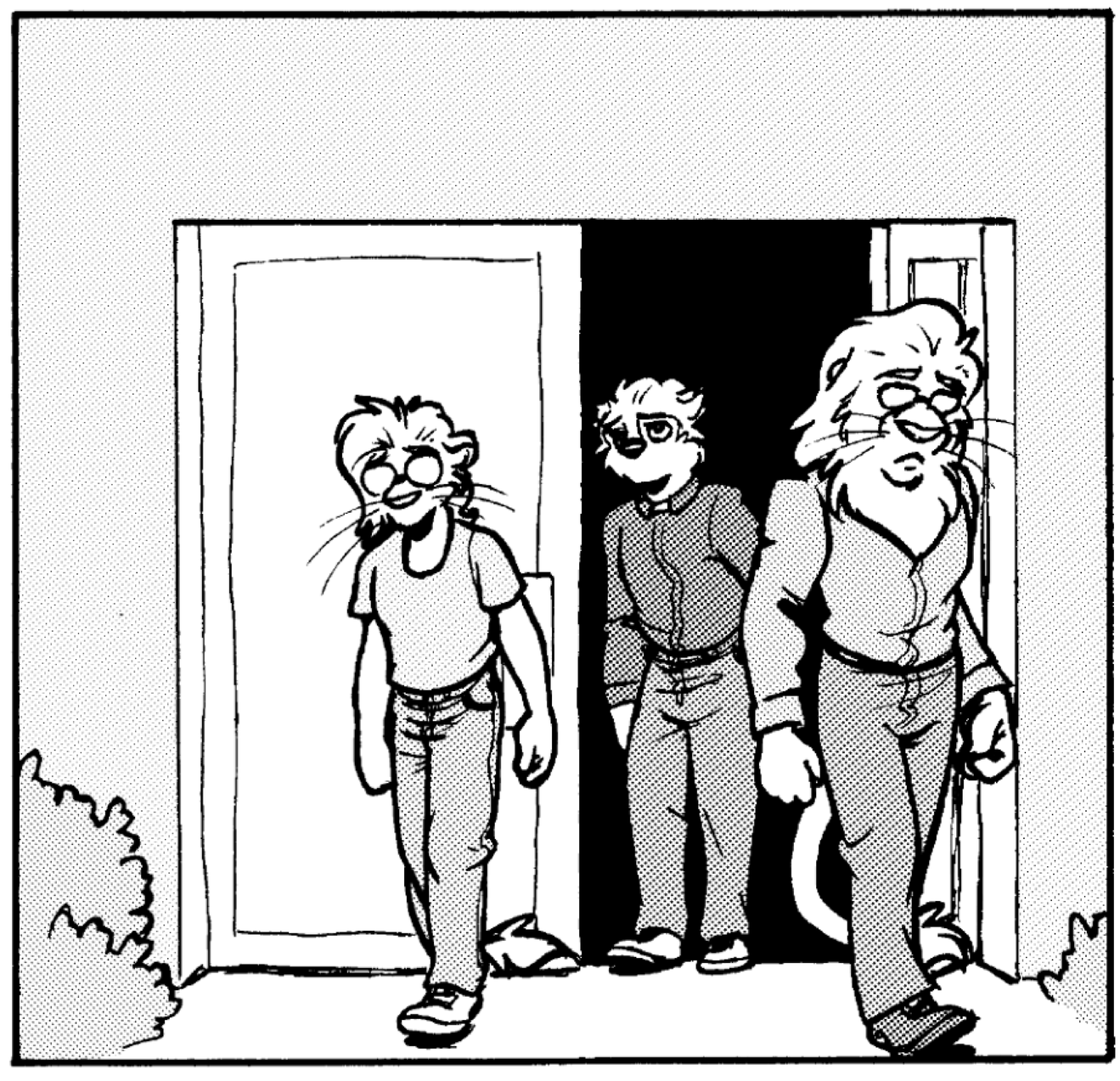
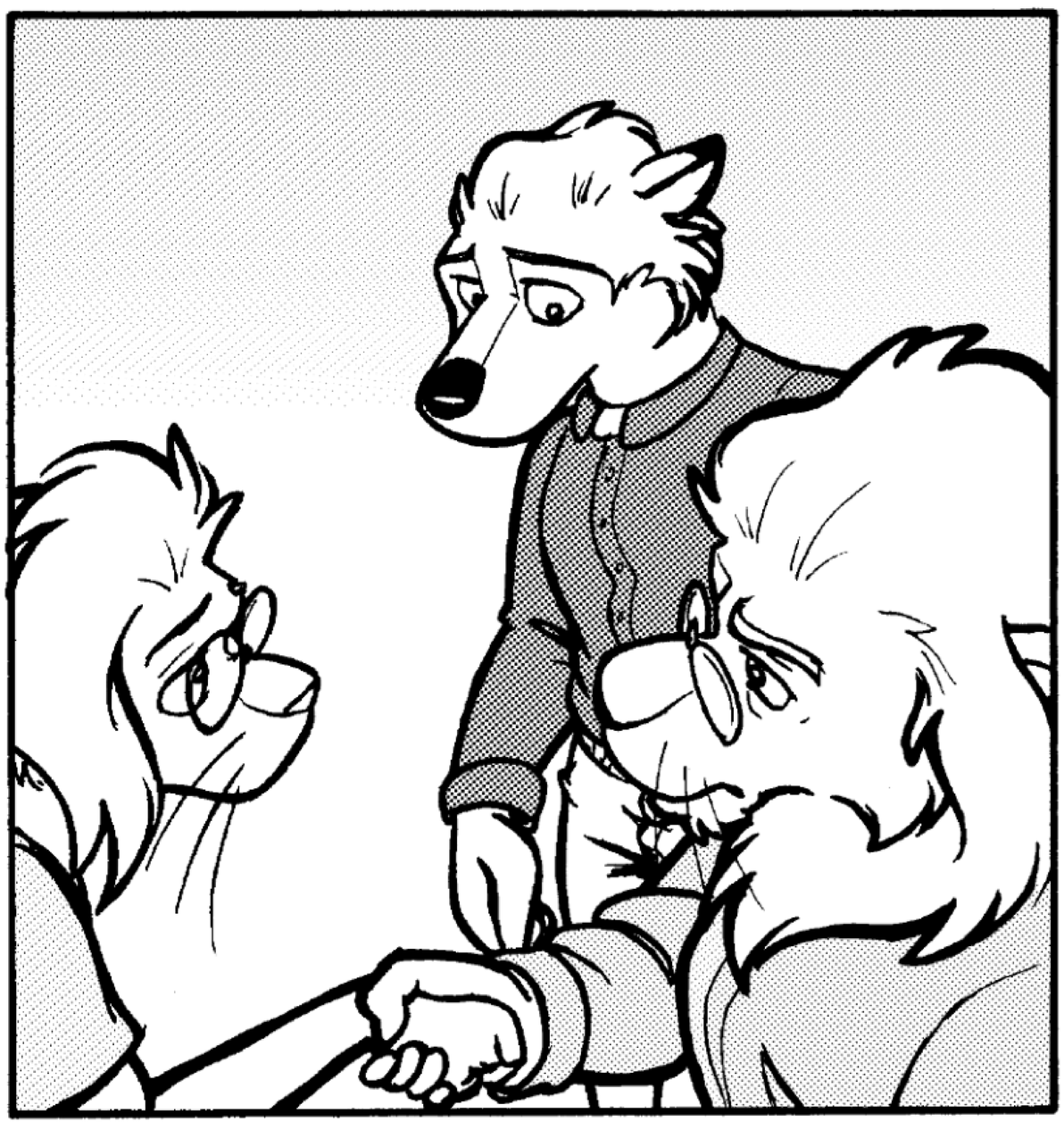
STORY BY LANCE RUND
ART BY CHRIS MCKINLEY

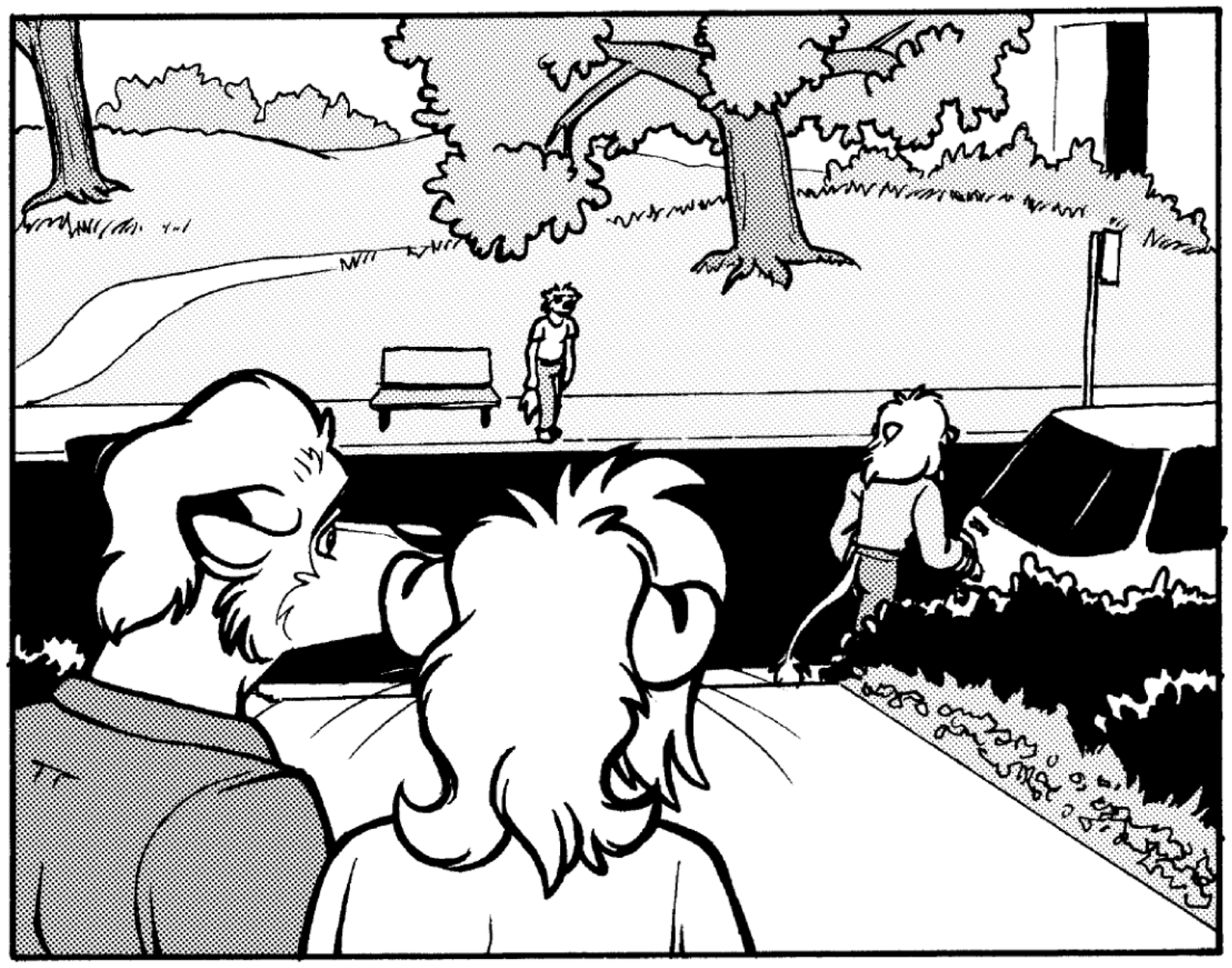


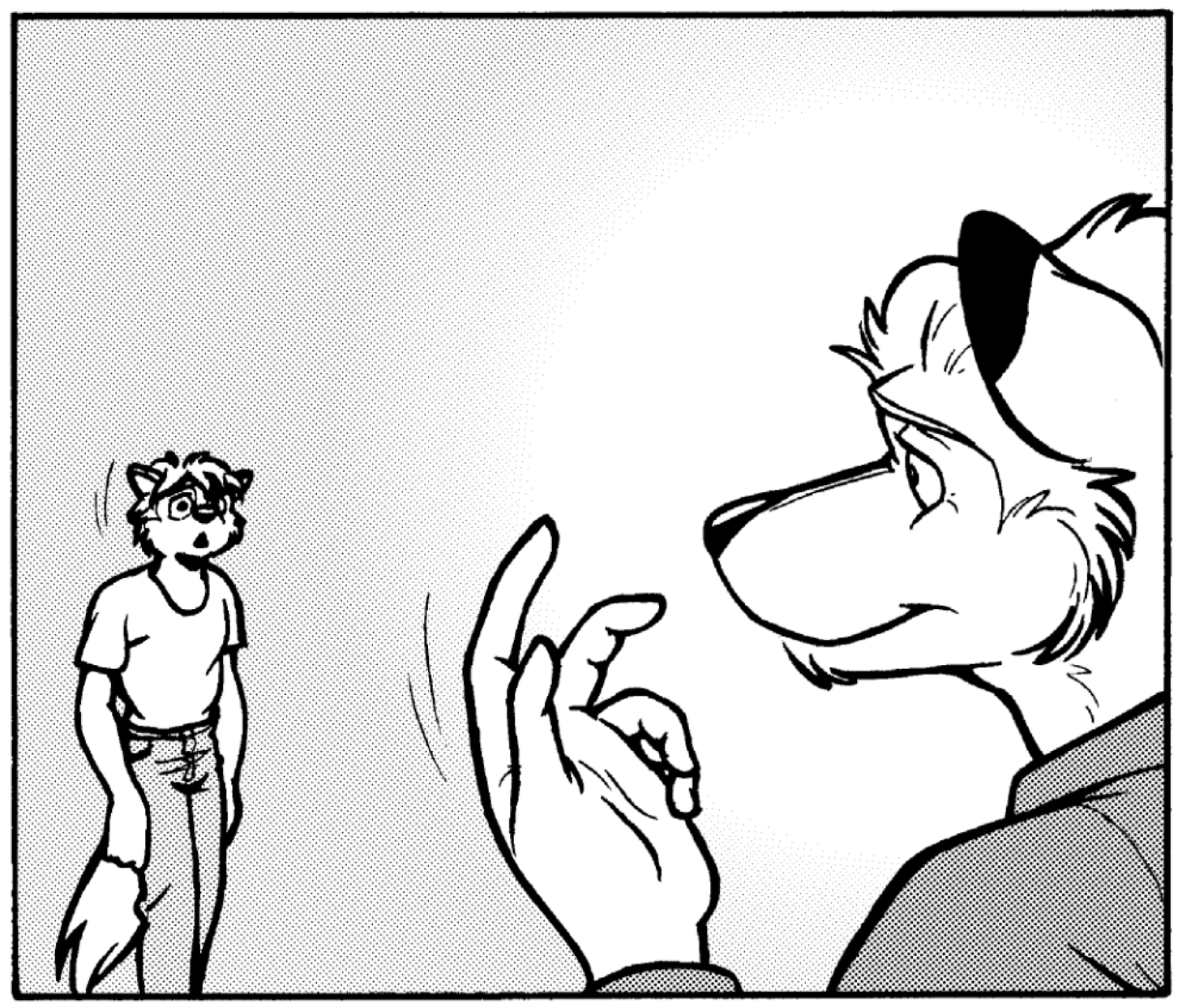




$10
PLEASE!





I DON'T THINK HE'S READY TO TRUST YET.
HE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT. HE'S DOING THE BEST HE CAN.

SO... HOW DID IT GO?
DAD'S STILL UPSET, BUT HE REALIZES THAT I HAVE TO DO WHAT I THINK IS RIGHT.
THAT'S GOOD.

AND YOU'RE THE RIGHT MAN FOR ME.
HAVE I TOLD YOU HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU?
YOU CAN TELL ME AGAIN...

END.

What's Good For The Goose...

Story by Lance Rund
Art by Chris McKinley

I SWEAR, THAT PUPPY IS HALF CHICKEN!
YOU NEVER GIVE UP, DO YOU?

NOT 'TIL HE AT LEAST TRIES! SCAREDY-DOG...
thppt

WELL, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN WITH A GIRL?
THAT'S DIFFERENT! GIRLS ARE ICKY!

TAP TAP TAP TAP
SHAME ON YOU! CRITICIZING STEVEN FOR NOT TRYING BOYS, WHEN YOU WON'T TRY GIRLS...
B-BUT--
SCAREDY-COON!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT... BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE HAD A CHANCE! I MEAN, WHAT GIRL WOULD WANT A LITTLE FAIRY LIKE ME?
I'M SURE LOTS OF GIRLS WOULD!

NO WAY! GIRLS LIKE BIG GUYS LIKE TINY AND CUTE GUYS LIKE STEVEN!
NONSENSE! YOU'D BE VERY ATTRACTIVE TO A LOT OF GIRLS... AND I OUGHTA KNOW, I AM ONE!

WELL, MAYBE... IF SOMEONE LIKE YOU EVER ASKS...
RICKY..?

I AM ASKING.

EEP!

SERIOUSLY... I REALLY LIKE YOU, AND I'D LOVE TO BE ABLE TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING NEW.
BUT, BUT I CAN'T DO IT WITH YOU! YOU'RE MY FRIEND!

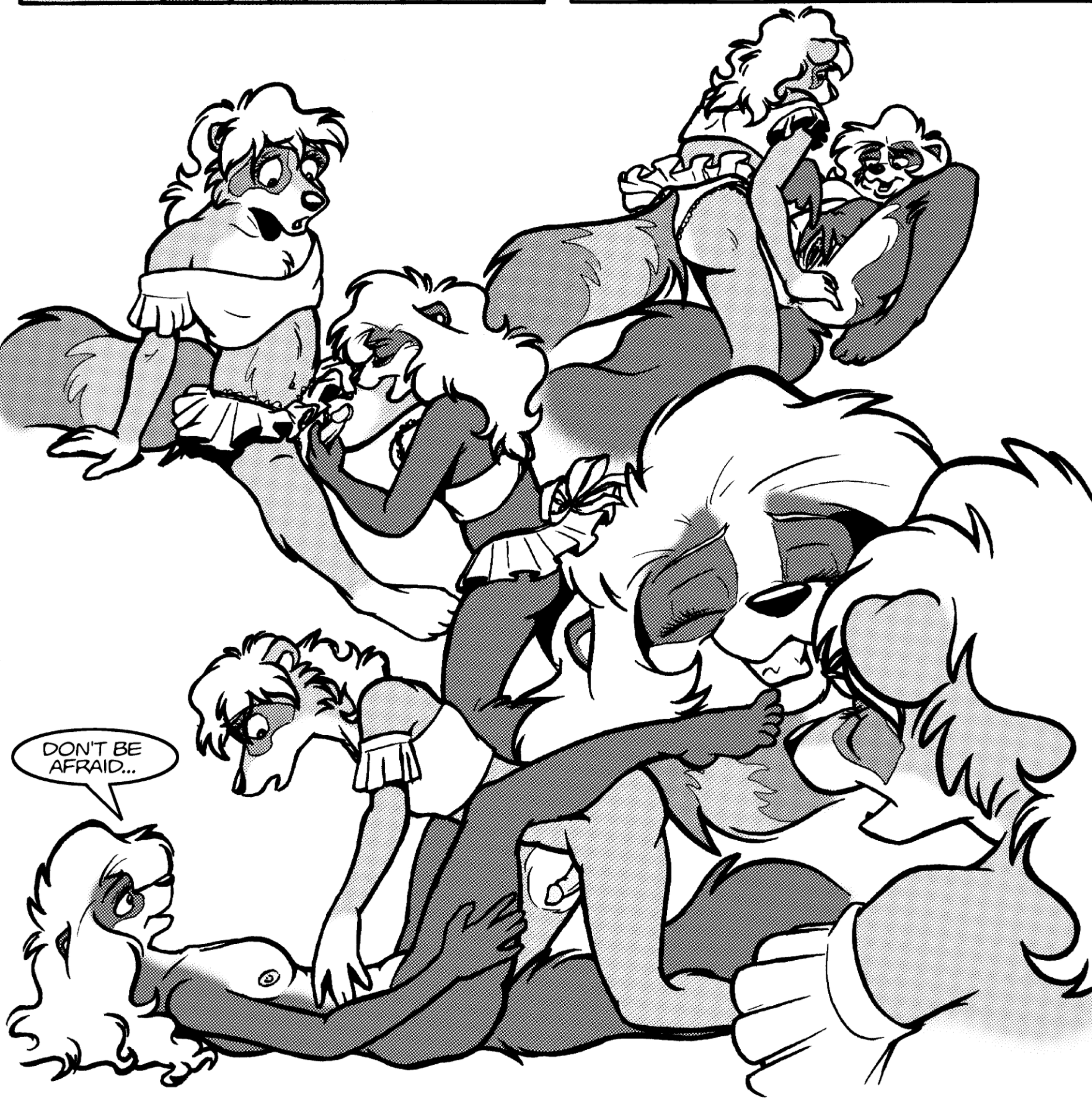
WHO BETTER, THEN?
≥ lick ≤

PLEASE?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?! I WAS ABOUT TO SAY "NO" TO SEX!
THAT'S THE RICKY WE KNOW AND LOVE!

YOU REALLY DO LOOK SEXY IN THOSE.
THEY MAKE ME FEEL PRETTY...

KEEP 'EM ON.


DON'T BE AFRAID...

THAT WAS REALLY NICE.
I NEVER THOUGHT A GIRL COULD FEEL SO GOOD!

I REALLY LIKE YOUR BOOBIES!
≥GIGGLE≤ "BOOBIES"..?

SO, ARE GIRLS STILL ICKY?
ALL OF THEM... EXCEPT YOU!
FAIR ENOUGH...

≥SIGH≤

DON'T TELL ANYONE, THOUGH... IT WOULD RUIN MY REPUTATION!
YOUR DARK SECRET IS SAFE WITH ME... IF...
IF?

FIRST, YOU BUY ME A BUNCH OF PANTIES TO REPLACE ALL THE ONES YOU SNITCHED AND MASTURBATED IN...
YOU KNEW ABOUT THAT?!
AND HELP ME WITH MY CALCULUS HOMEWORK...
UH HUH, OKAY...
AND MAKE LOVE TO ME AGAIN! REAL HARD! RIGHT NOW!
YES, MA'AM!

END.

NICE VIEW...
LOOKS ARE FREE.
MINE! MINE! ALL MINE!
WHAT A NIGHT...
YEAH, BUT YOU GOT YOUR PAPER DONE IN TIME.
THAT FEELS NICE.
YOU WASH MY BACK, I WASH YOURS!
THAT'S 'SCRATCH YOUR BACK'
PICKY, PICKY!
YOU WANT THESE WASHED OR SCRATCHED?
WASHED, PLEASE!
Good Clean Fun
art by terrie smith
story by lance rund

LET'S POLISH THIS TIL IT SHINES!

WHURF!

SQUEAK SQUEAK

EASY THERE! UNLIKE **YOU,** I HAVEN'T WHACKED OFF YET THIS MORNING.

POOR WOLFIE...

I'LL 'POOR WOLFIE' YOU...

PROMISES, PROMISES!

I KEEP MY PROMISES... ESPECIALLY TO YOU.

QUICK, WHILE YOU STILL CAN GET IT ALL IN!

ASK DR. RICKY: "CANINE MALES HAVE A SWELLING ON THE BASE OF THEIR WEENIES THAT GETS BIG AND LOCKS THEM INSIDE THEIR PARTNERS... THAT'S WHY WOOFIES LIKE MARCUS GET STUCK, AND WHY THEY GOTTA HURRY!"

YESSS...

NGGGF!

HOW'RE YOU DOING, LOVER?
IT'S OKAY, NOW THAT YOU'RE ALL THE WAY IN.
I THINK I'LL STAY RIGHT HERE FOR A WHILE.

AS IF YOU HAVE A CHOICE...
CANINE SUPERIORITY! BEST COCKS IN THE WORLD!
YOU MEAN, LIKE STEVEN?
SMARTASS.

OOOH!

HOLD THAT POSE!
CLICK WHRRR

WHAT--
SAY "CHEESE!"
CLICK WHRRR

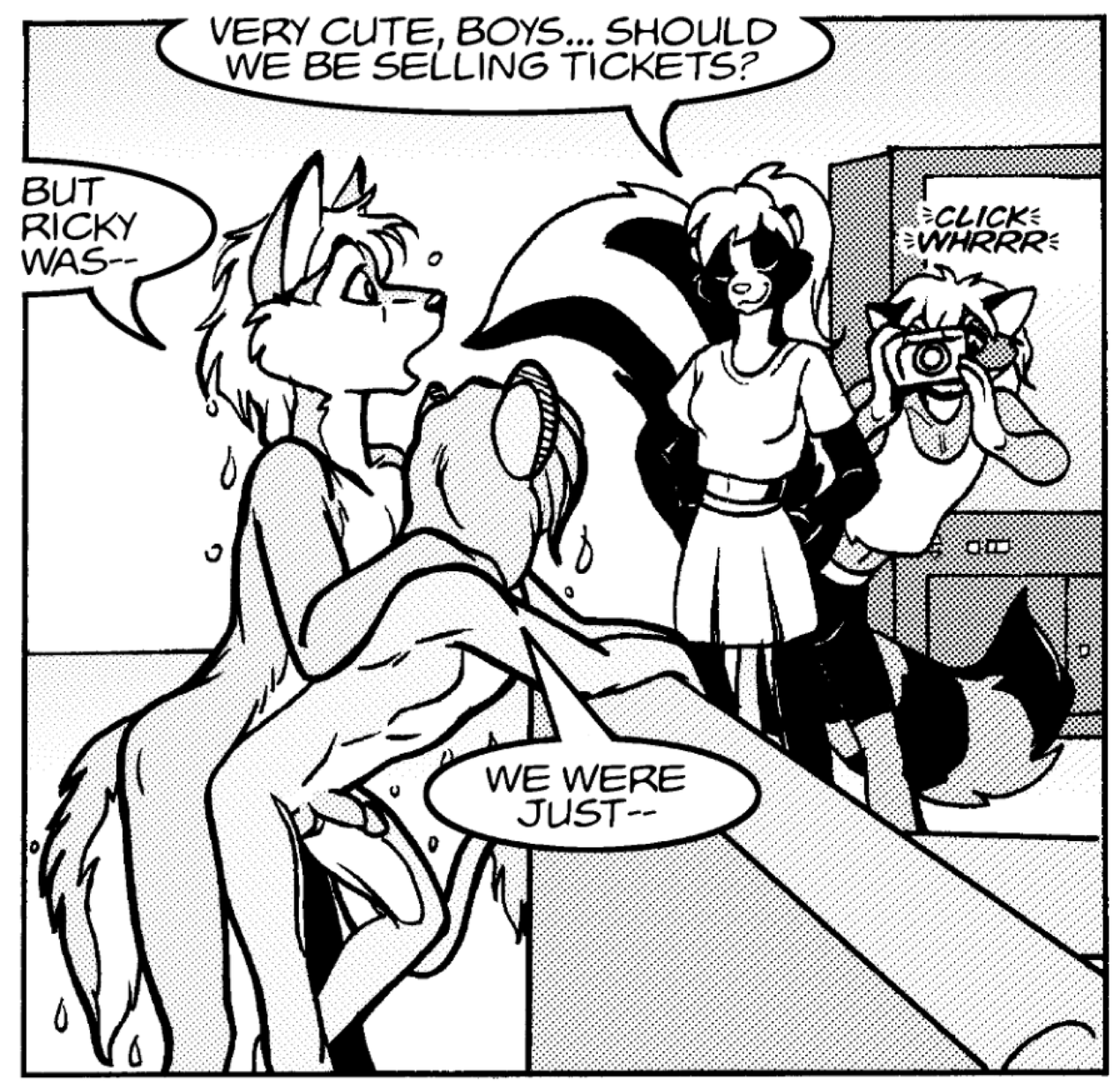
DAMMIT, RICKY! I'LL SHOVE THAT CAMERA UP YOUR ASS!
OW! CAREFUL OF MY BUTT!
GOTTA CATCH ME FIRST!

COME BACK HERE!
LOOK OUT! HEY!
NICE WEENIE, DANNYLION!
CLICK WHRRR

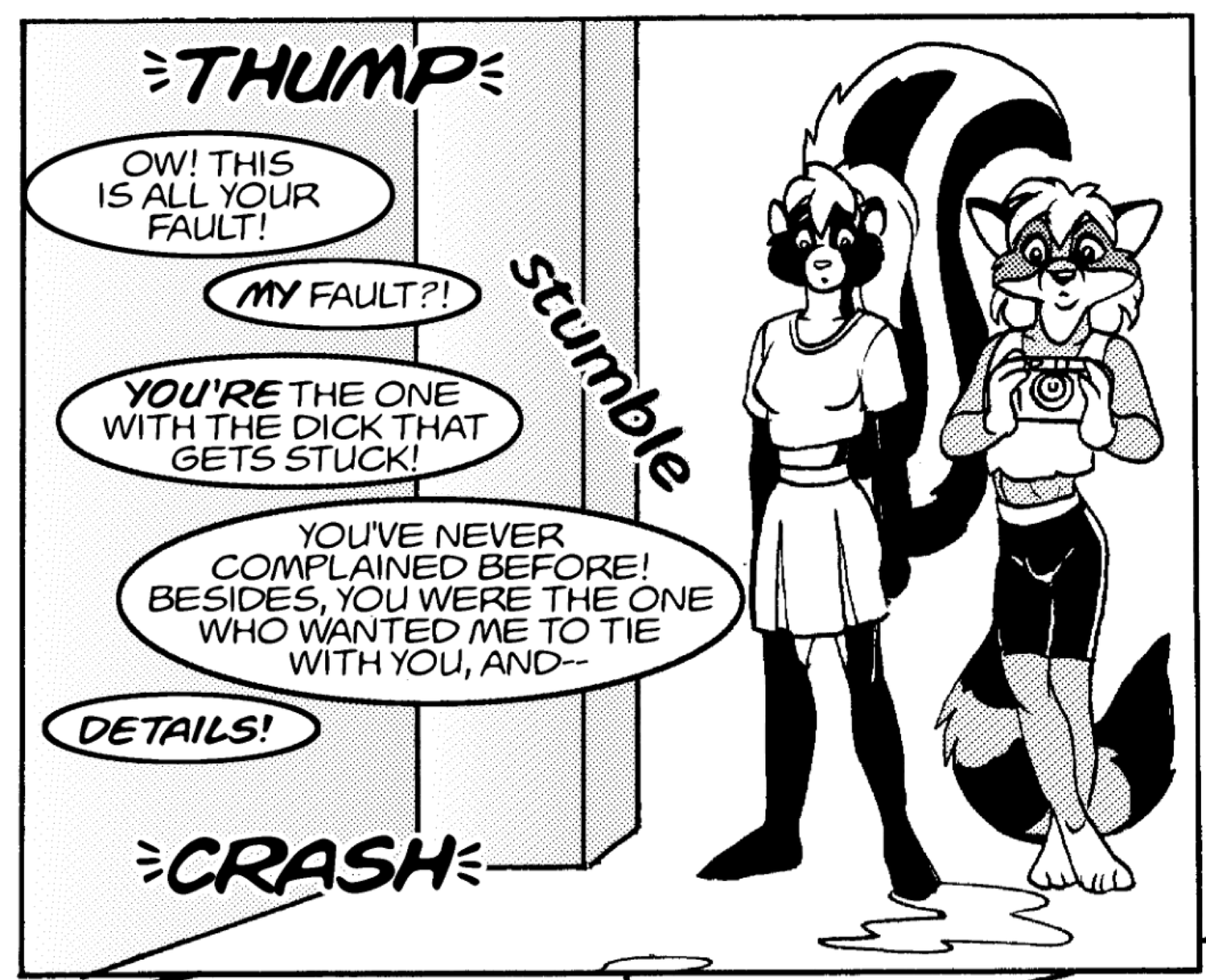
I'LL SPANK YOU IN WAYS YOU WON'T LIKE!
GIGGLE
CLICK WHRRR
ACK!

thppt

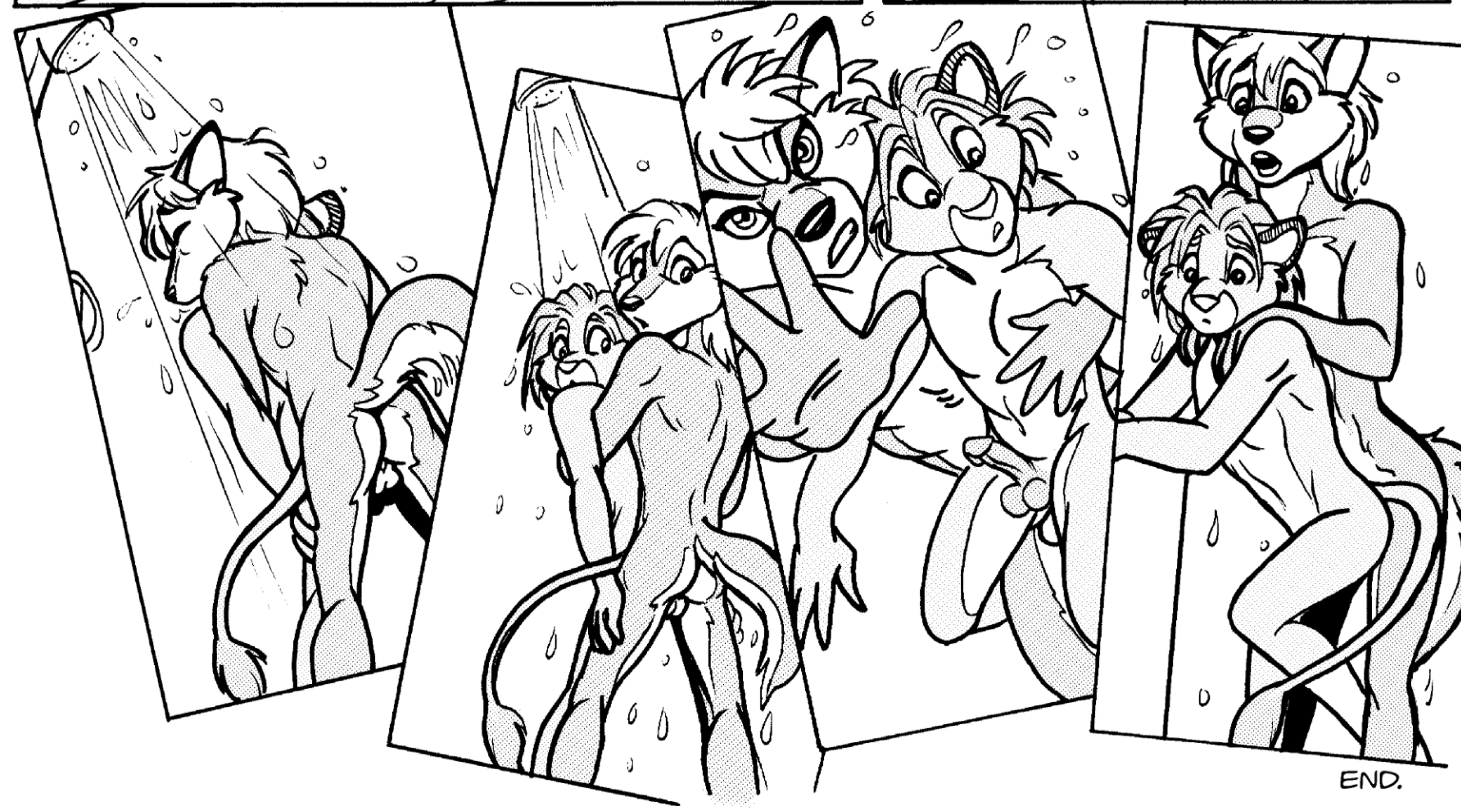
AHEM.


VERY CUTE, BOYS... SHOULD WE BE SELLING TICKETS?
BUT RICKY WAS--
CLICK WHRRR
WE WERE JUST--

HIT THE SHOWERS!
SORRY...


THUMP
OW! THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!
MY FAULT?!
YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE DICK THAT GETS STUCK!
YOU'VE NEVER COMPLAINED BEFORE! BESIDES, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO WANTED ME TO TIE WITH YOU, AND--
DETAILS!
stumble
CRASH

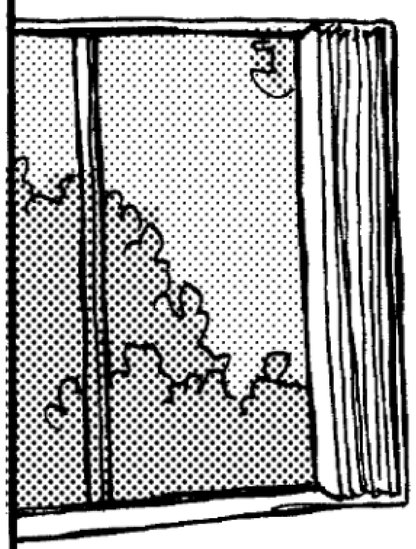
YOU GOT THE PICTURES?
JUST LIKE YOU SAID!
LET'S GET TO THE PHOTO LAB!

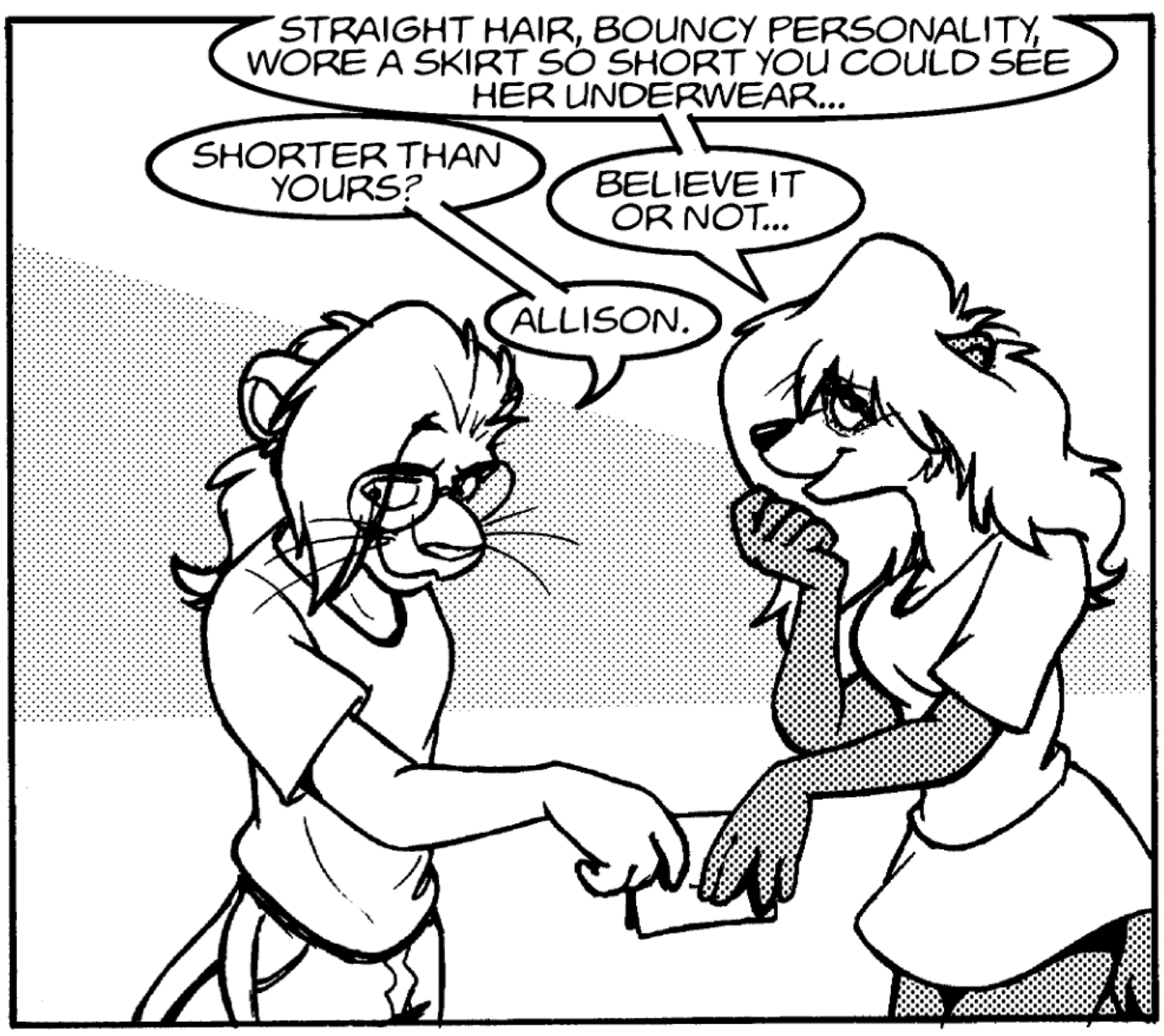


END.

THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES

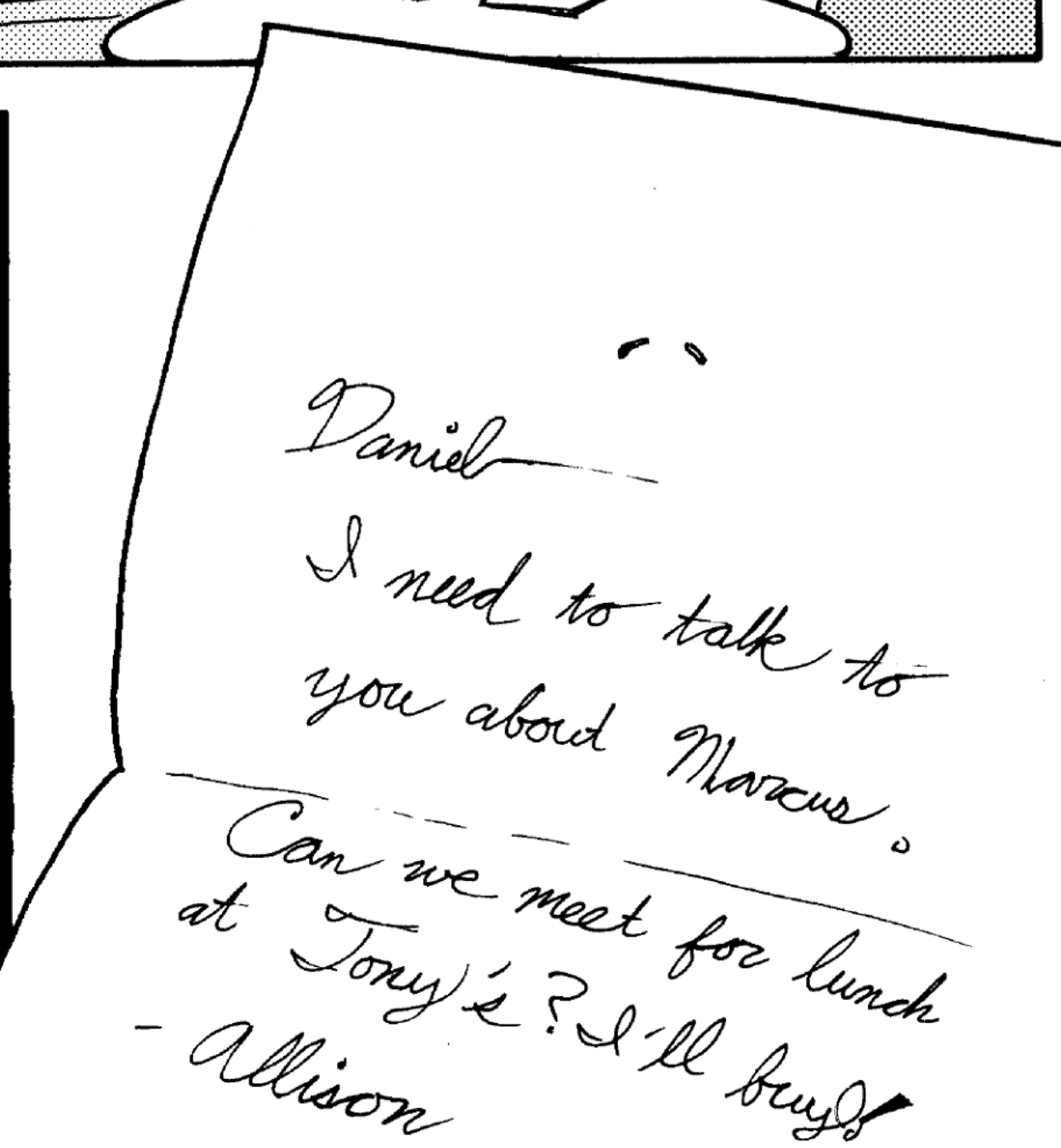
STORY BY LANCE RUND
ART BY CHRIS MCKINLEY

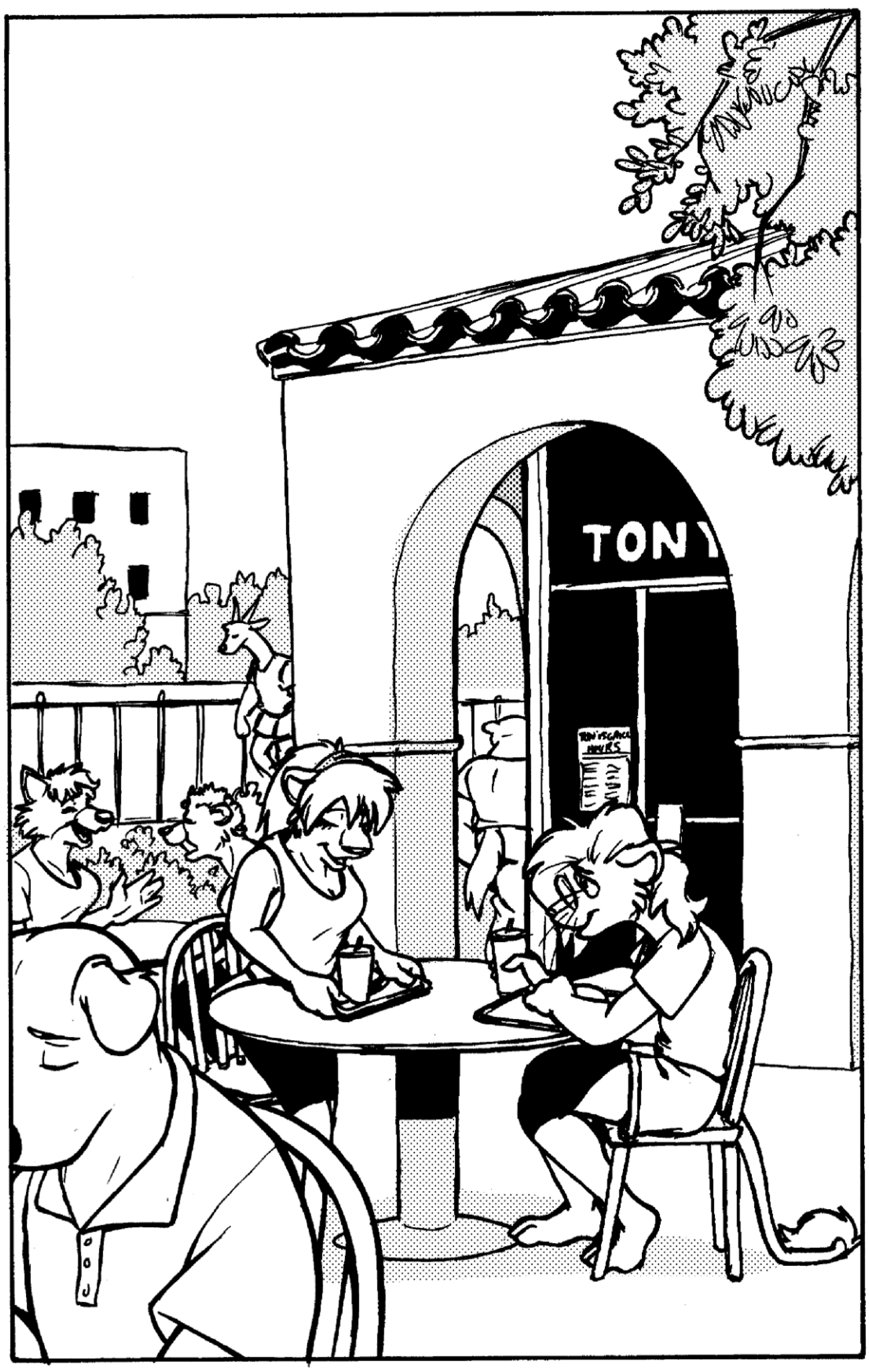



STRAIGHT HAIR, BOUNCY PERSONALITY, WORE A SKIRT SO SHORT YOU COULD SEE HER UNDERWEAR...
SHORTER THAN YOURS?
BELIEVE IT OR NOT...
ALLISON.

I GOTTA GO...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?

PROBABLY NOT.


Daniel
I need to talk to you about Marcus.
Can we meet for lunch at Tony's? I'll buy!
- Allison


TONY

MMM... BIG THROBBY MEAT...
PERVERT!
WELL, SOMETHING'S GOTTA GET ME THROUGH THE NIGHT!

SO, WHAT'S WITH THE MYSTERY-NOTE?

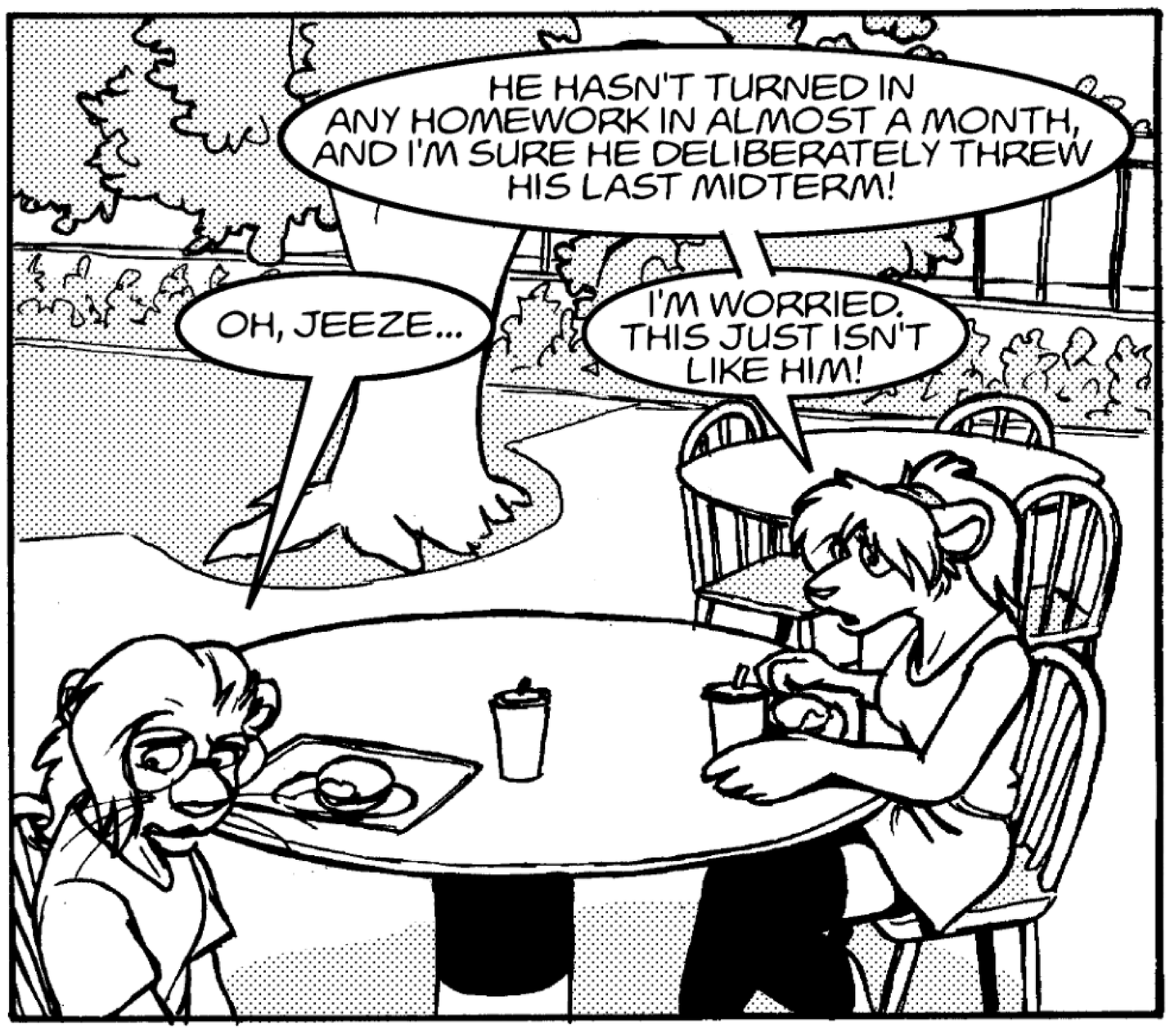
HAS MARCUS BEEN ACTING WEIRD LATELY?

UM... NO MORE THAN USUAL. WE'VE HAD SOME ROUGH TIMES LATELY, THOUGH.
YEAH, I HEARD.
WHY DO YOU ASK?

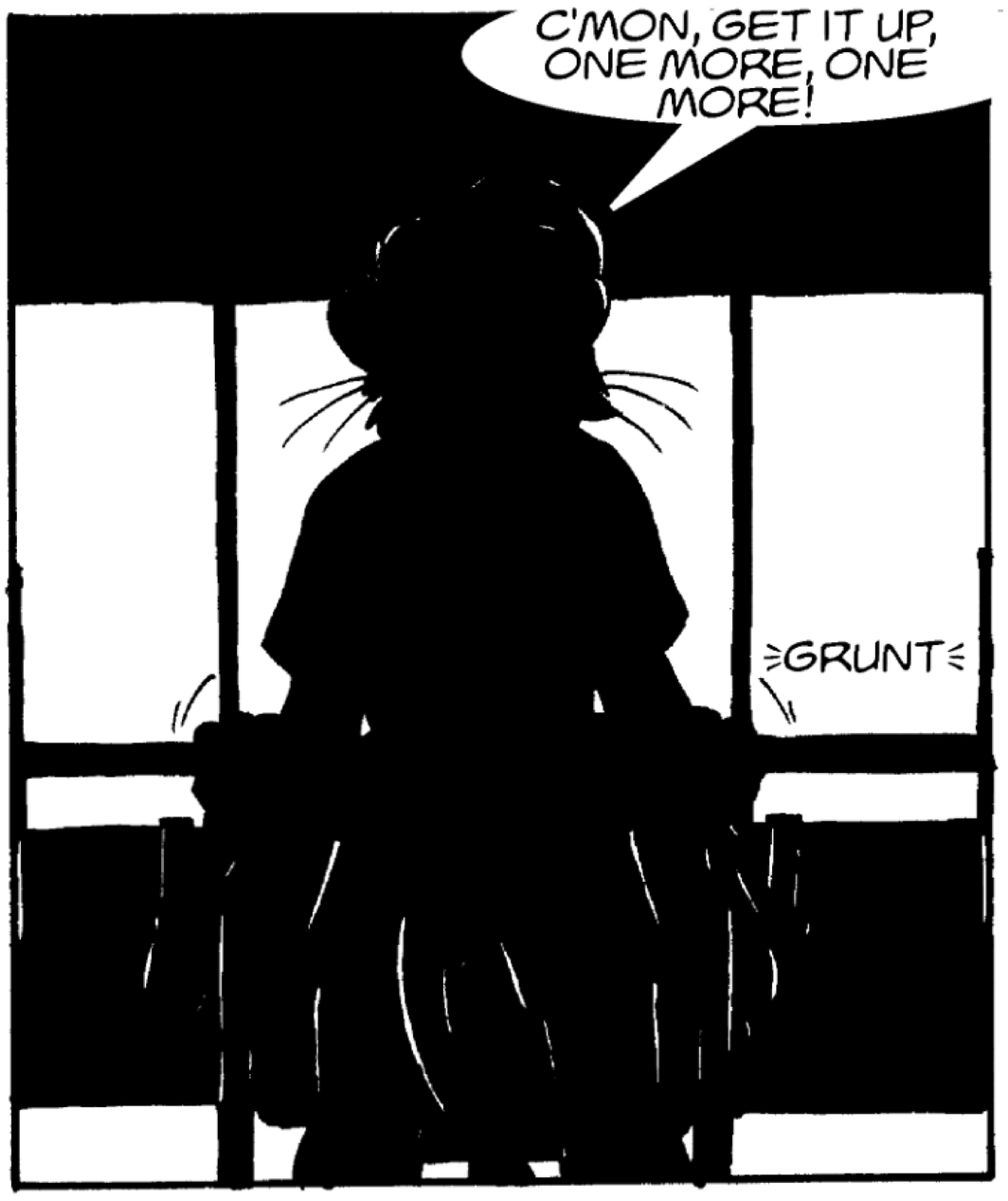
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG.

I'M THE GRADING ASSISTANT FOR PROFESSOR STERN'S "ECONOMICS AND POLITICS" CLASS. IT'S REQUIRED FOR POLY SCI MAJORS.
ISN'T MARCUS IN THAT CLASS?

YEAH. HE DID REALLY WELL IN THE FIRST FEW WEEKS, BUT...
BUT?
HE'S SLIPPING.


HE HASN'T TURNED IN ANY HOMEWORK IN ALMOST A MONTH, AND I'M SURE HE DELIBERATELY THREW HIS LAST MIDTERM!
OH, JEEZE...
I'M WORRIED. THIS JUST ISN'T LIKE HIM!

ALLISON, THIS IS IMPORTANT. ARE YOU SURE?
I'M SURE.


C'MON, GET IT UP, ONE MORE, ONE MORE!
GRUNT

PANT PANT YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD KNOW I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THAT!
BUT THAT WAS LAST NIGHT! WHAT ABOUT TODAY?
SMARTASS...

SO HOW ARE YOUR CLASSES GOING?
OH, PRETTY GOOD...
ALL OF THEM?

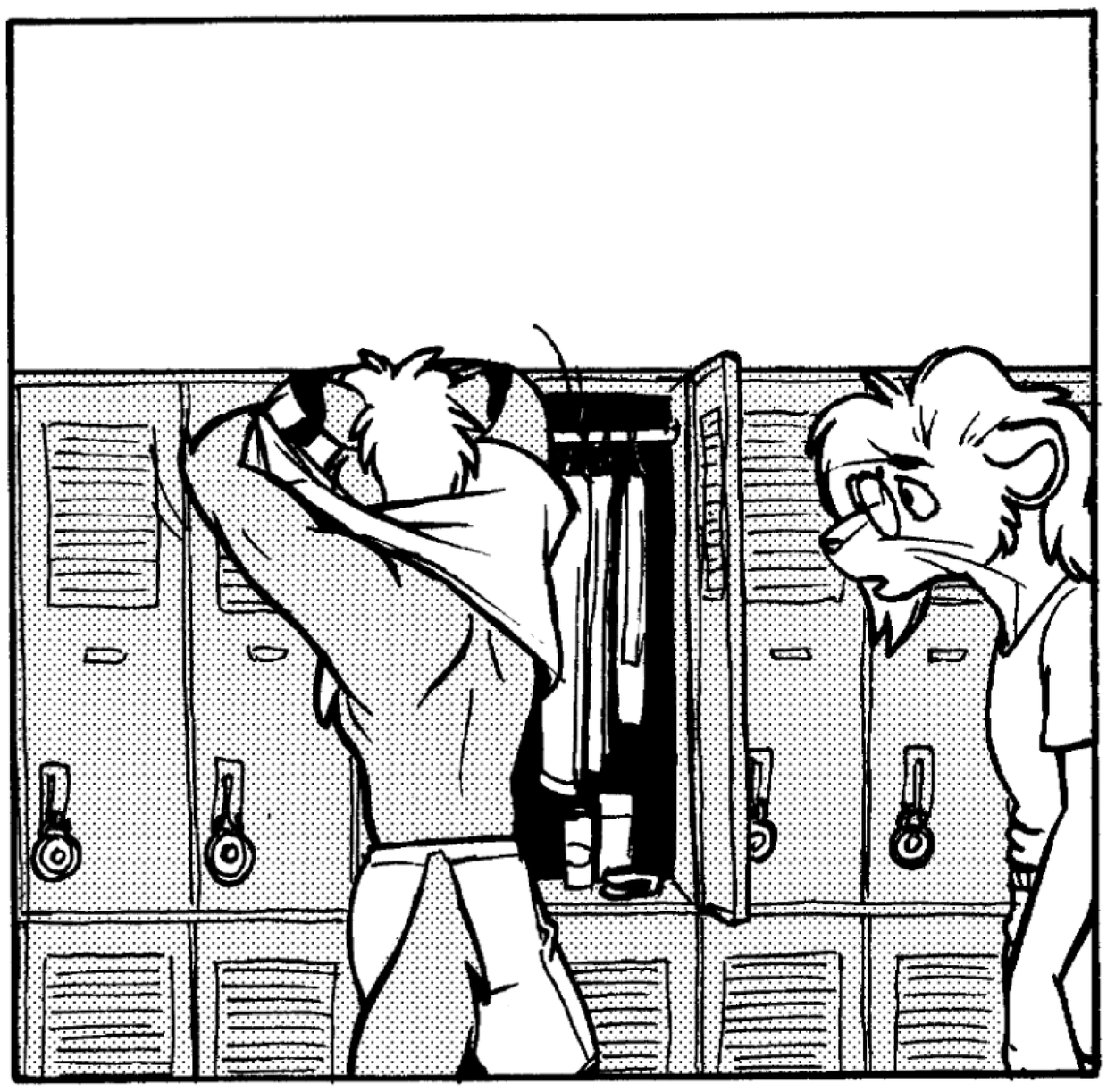
THIS IS GOING SOMEWHERE, I CAN TELL...
YEAH, I HEARD YOU'RE HAVING PROBLEMS IN YOUR ECONOMICS CLASS.

ALLISON...
YEAH, WE SEE EACH OTHER ONCE IN A WHILE.

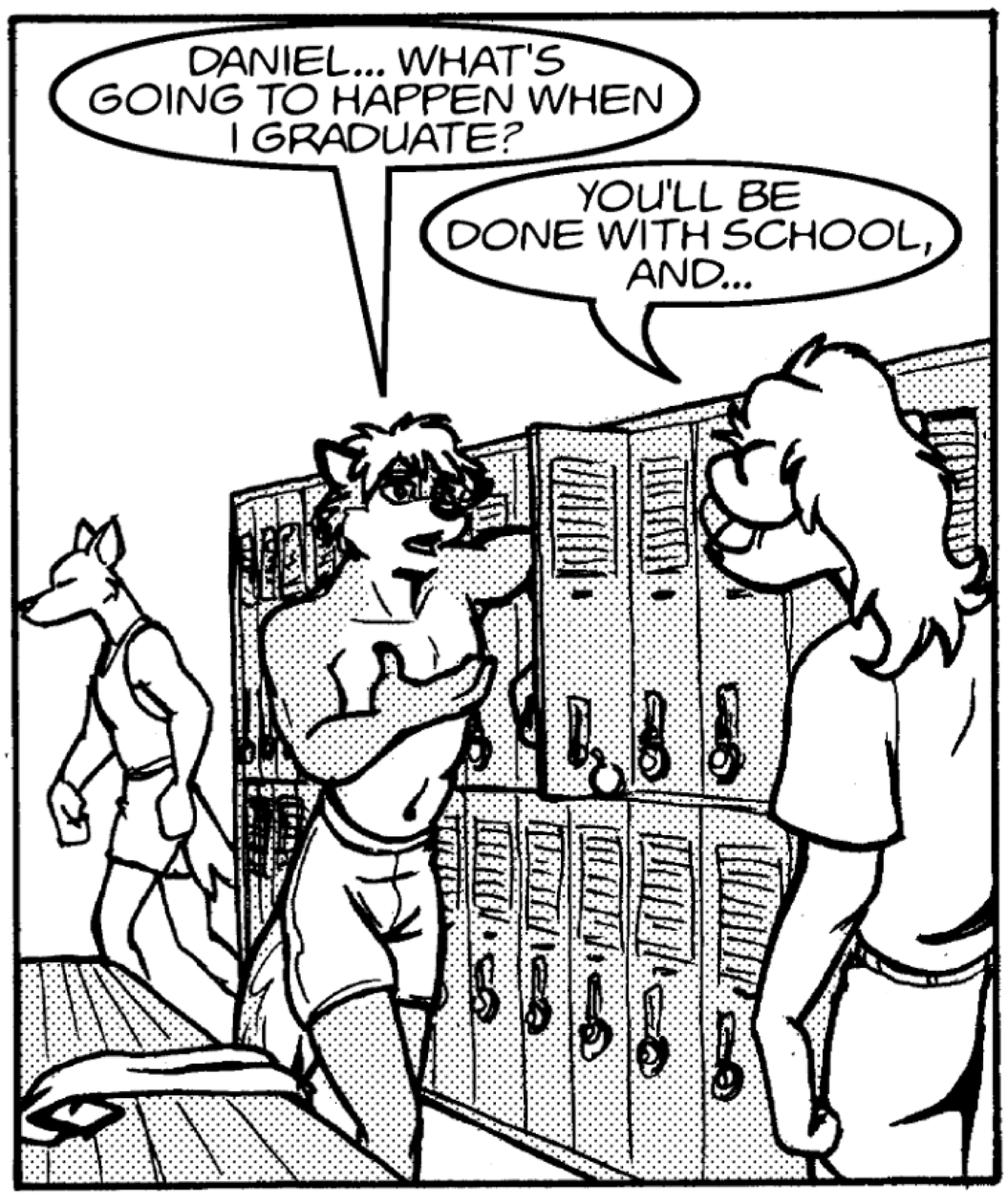
MEN'S LOCKERS
THE LAST MIDTERM WAS KIND OF HARD...
MARCUS, YOU DIDN'T EVEN TRY!

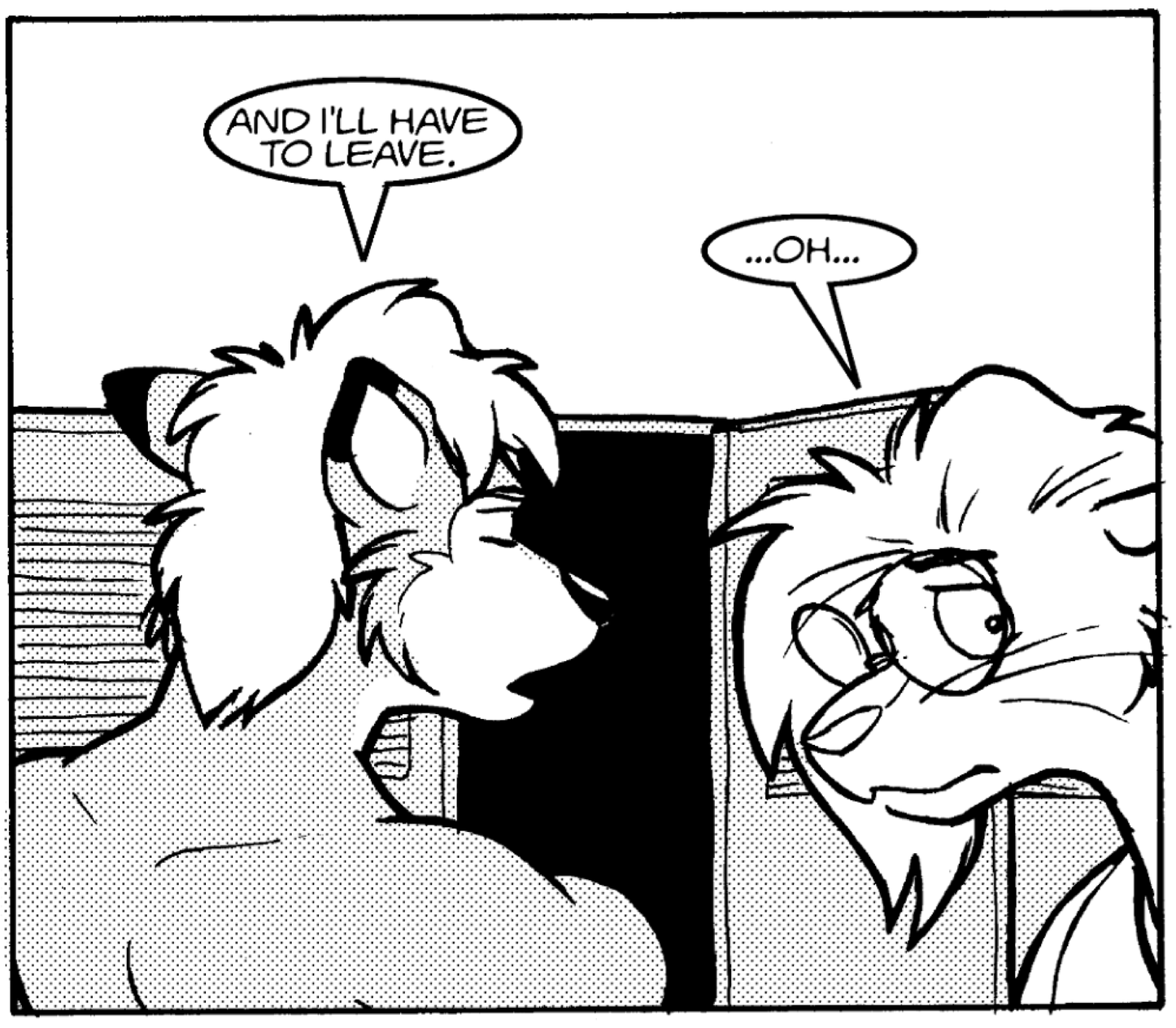
I SAW WHAT YOU TURNED IN. YOU'RE THROWING THE CLASS, AREN'T YOU?

WHY?



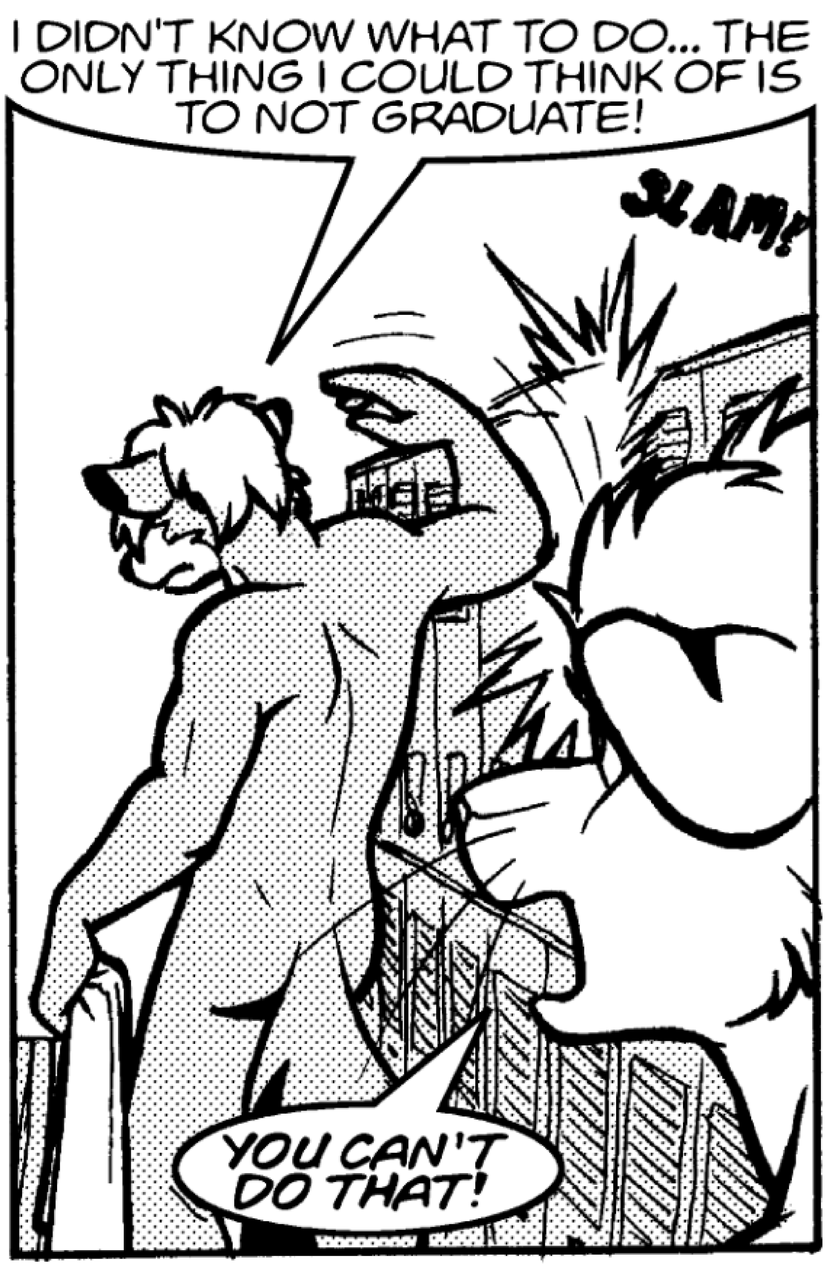
THAT'S THE LAST CLASS I NEED TO GRADUATE.
YOU SHOULD BE WORKING EXTRA HARD ON IT, THEN!

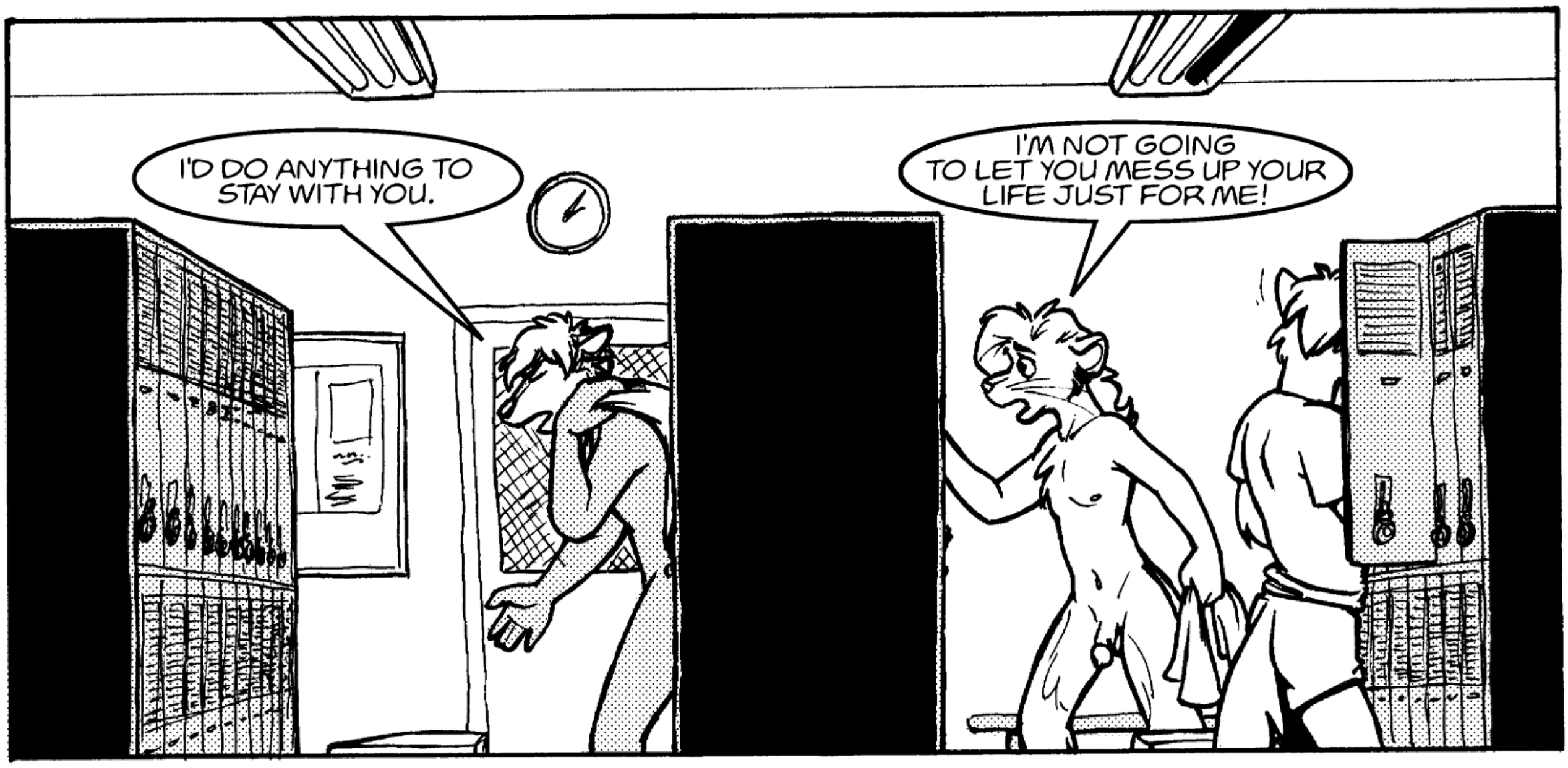

DANIEL... WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN I GRADUATE?
YOU'LL BE DONE WITH SCHOOL, AND...


AND I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE.
...OH...

BUT I THOUGHT... WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING BEFORE?
I WAS TRYING FOR GRAD SCHOOL. WE COULD STAY TOGETHER IF I GOT IN.

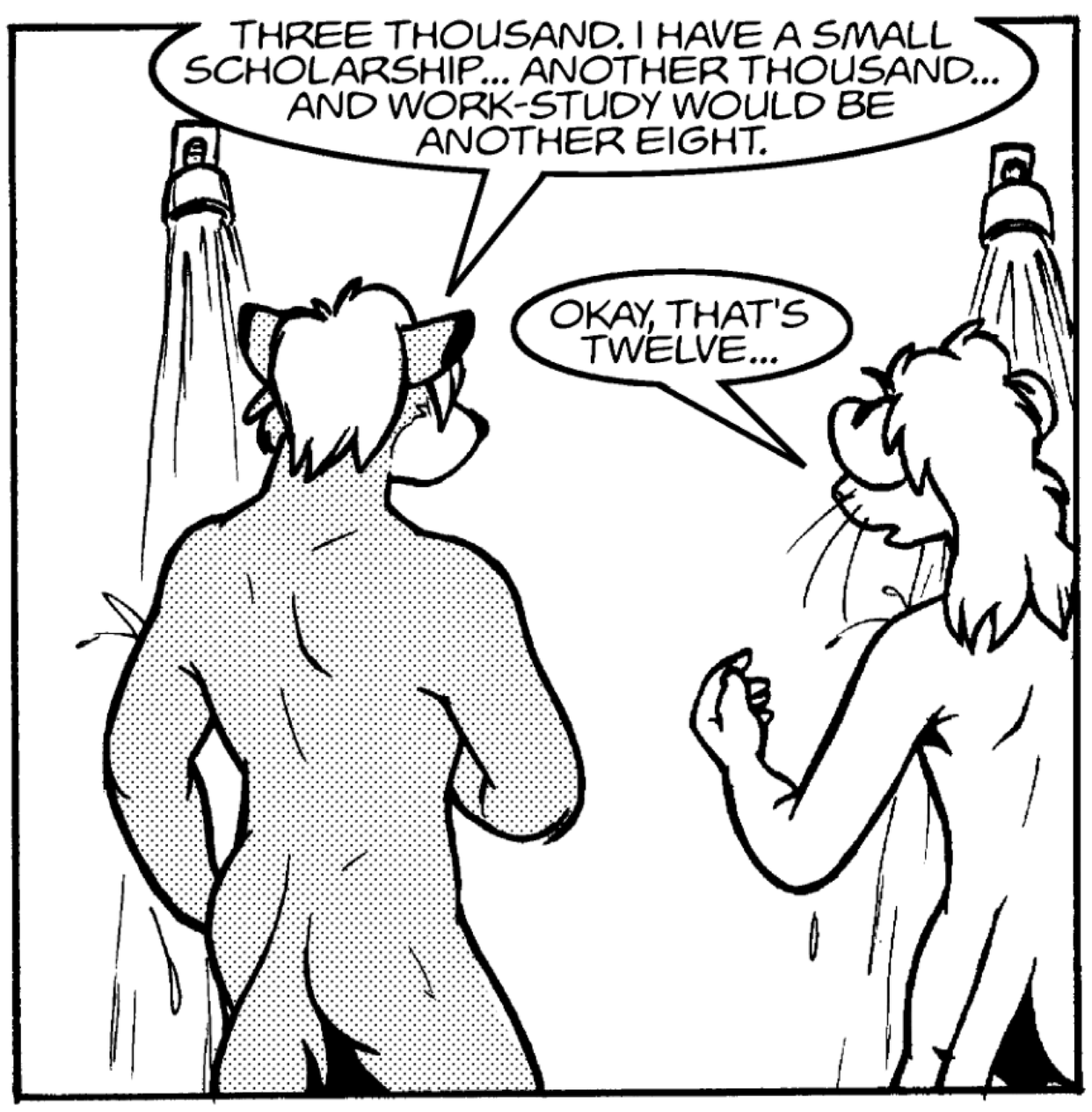
THEY ACCEPTED MY APPLICATION. IT COSTS SO MUCH, THOUGH... I CAN'T MAKE IT.


I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO... THE ONLY THING I COULD THINK OF IS TO NOT GRADUATE!
SLAM!
YOU CAN'T DO THAT!


I'D DO ANYTHING TO STAY WITH YOU.
I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU MESS UP YOUR LIFE JUST FOR ME!

PLEASE SHO
BEFORE ENTER
POOL AREA
I MEAN IT.

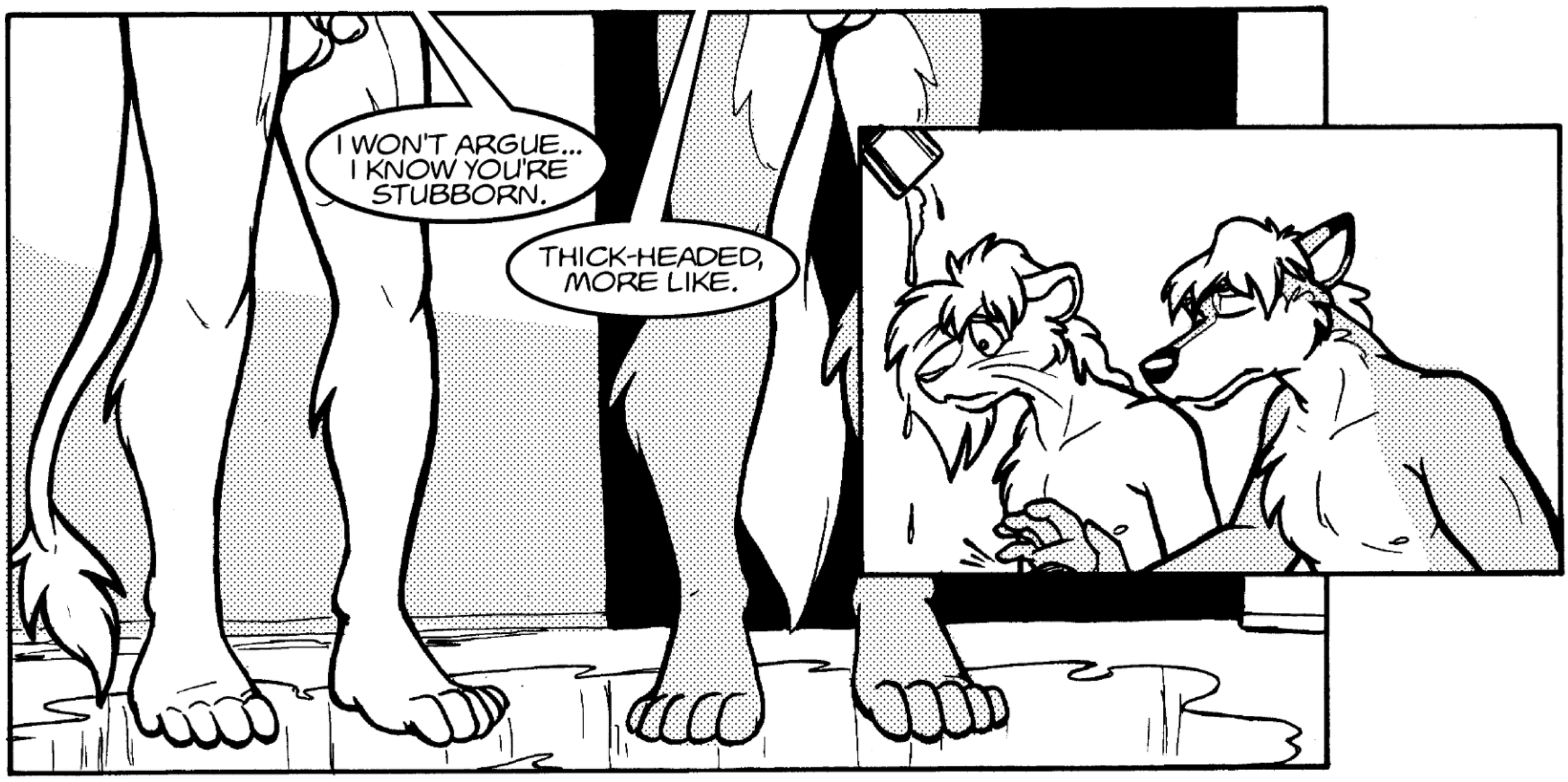
THE PROBLEM IS MONEY. I JUST CAN'T AFFORD IT.
WHAT ABOUT FINANCIAL AID?

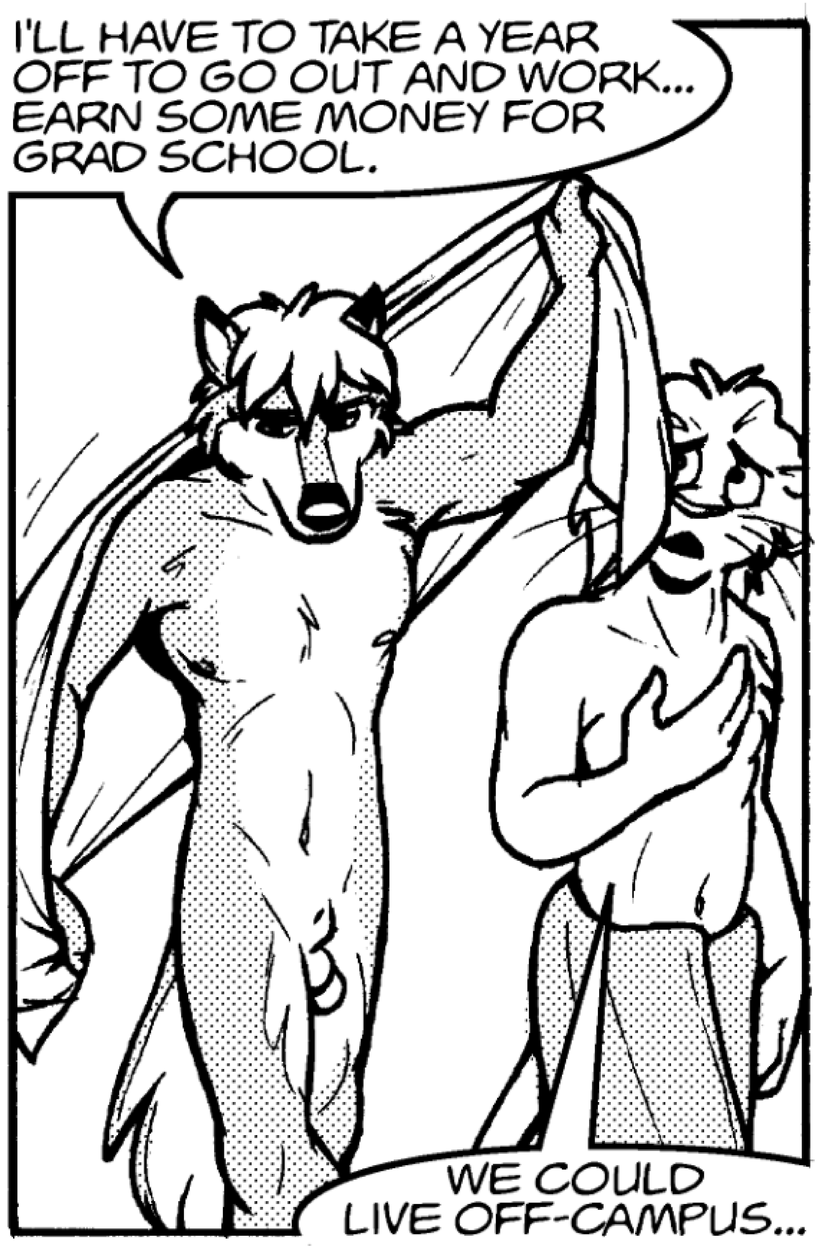

THREE THOUSAND. I HAVE A SMALL SCHOLARSHIP... ANOTHER THOUSAND... AND WORK-STUDY WOULD BE ANOTHER EIGHT.
OKAY, THAT'S TWELVE...

...OUT OF TWENTY-EIGHT. AND I'M MAXED OUT ON LOANS.
OUCH! THAT'S ALMOST TWICE UNDERGRAD!

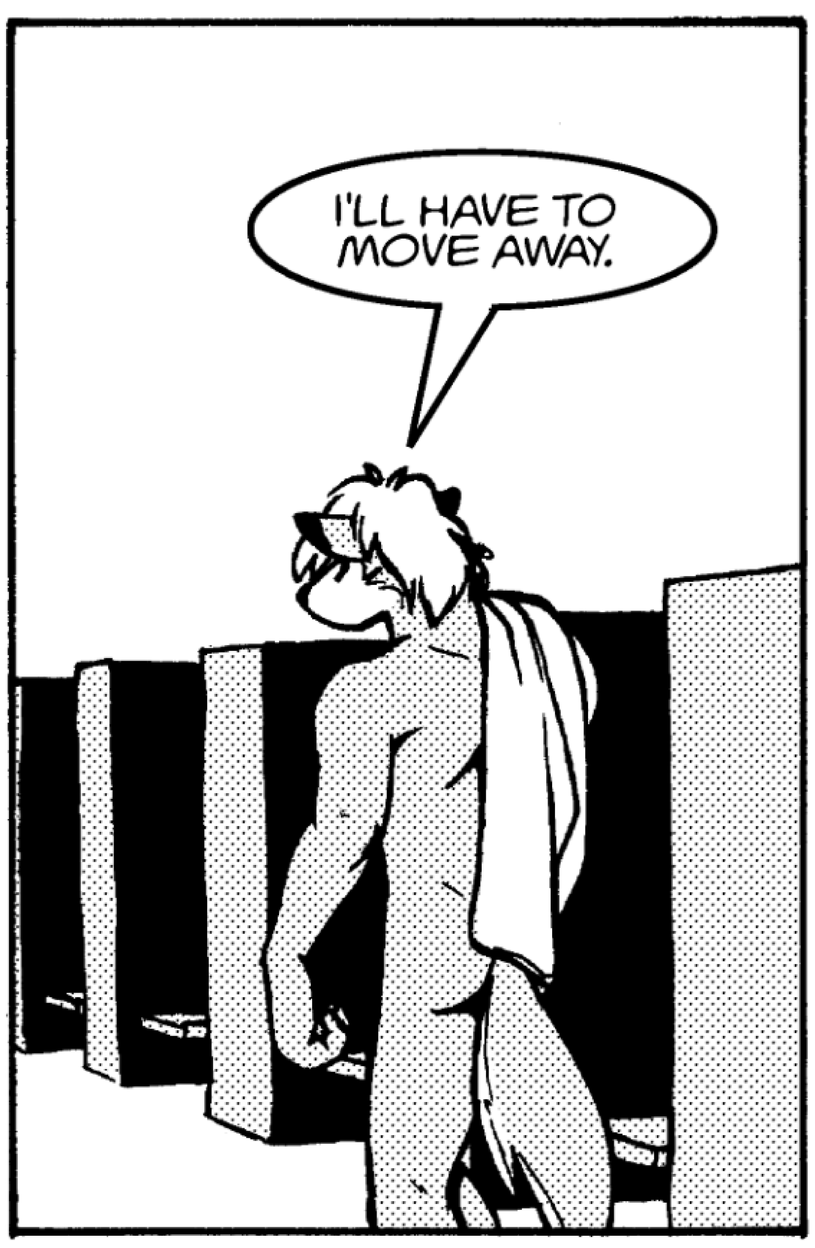
I'VE GOT SOME SAVINGS, THOUGH... JUST ENOUGH TO COVER YOUR FIRST YEAR.
NO!

I WILL NOT LET YOU GO BROKE FOR ME.
BUT--
NOT NEGOTIABLE. AND DON'T YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL TO FOLLOW ME!

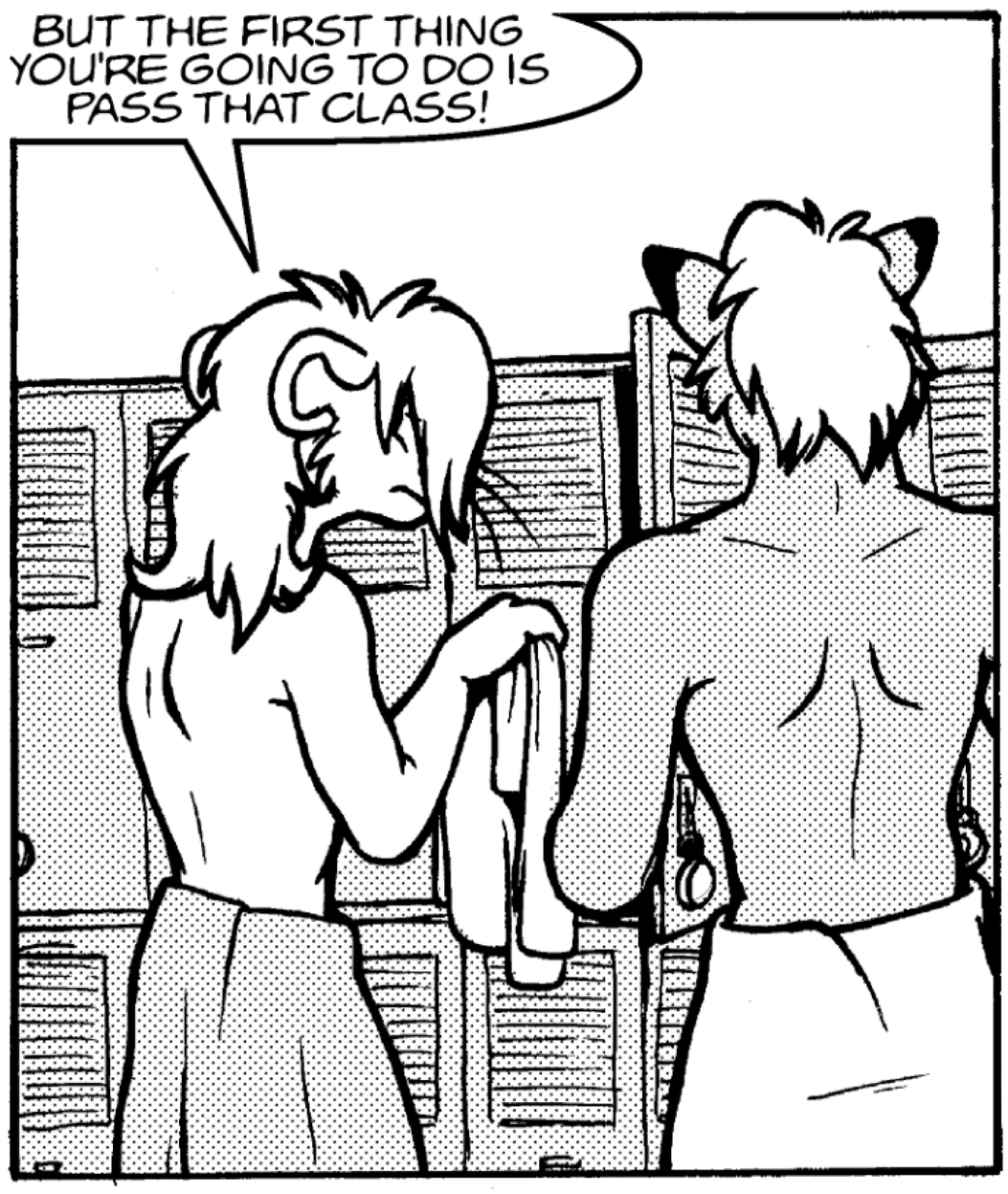

I WON'T ARGUE... I KNOW YOU'RE STUBBORN.
THICK-HEADED, MORE LIKE.


I'LL HAVE TO TAKE A YEAR OFF TO GO OUT AND WORK... EARN SOME MONEY FOR GRAD SCHOOL.
WE COULD LIVE OFF-CAMPUS...

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING AROUND HERE IS WAY TOO EXPENSIVE. IF I STAYED, I COULDN'T SAVE ANY MONEY.


I'LL HAVE TO MOVE AWAY.

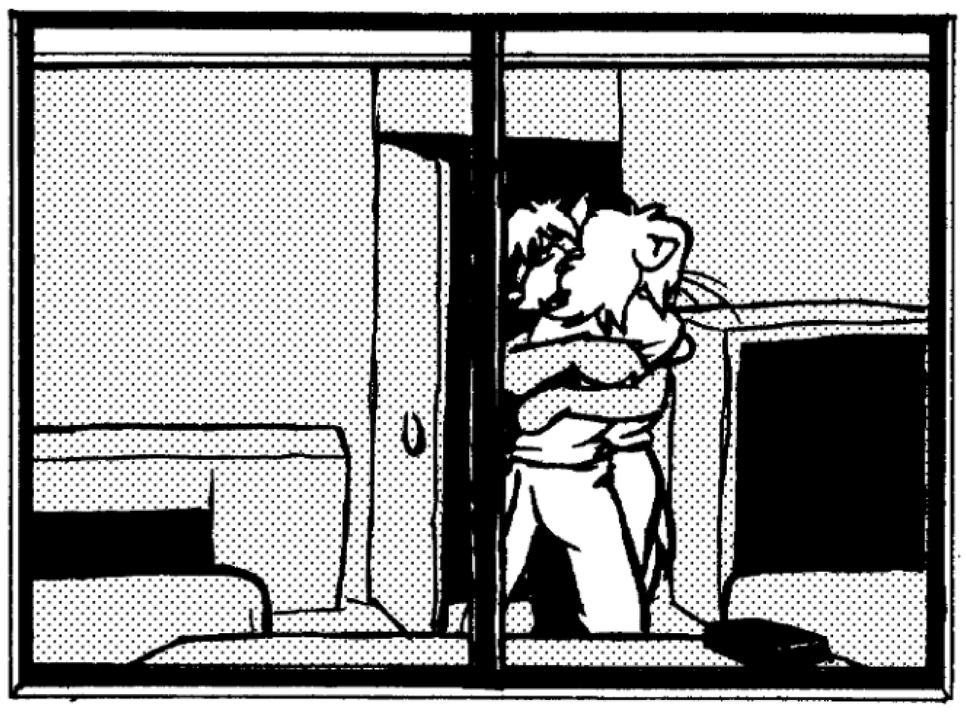
I'LL WAIT FOR YOU.

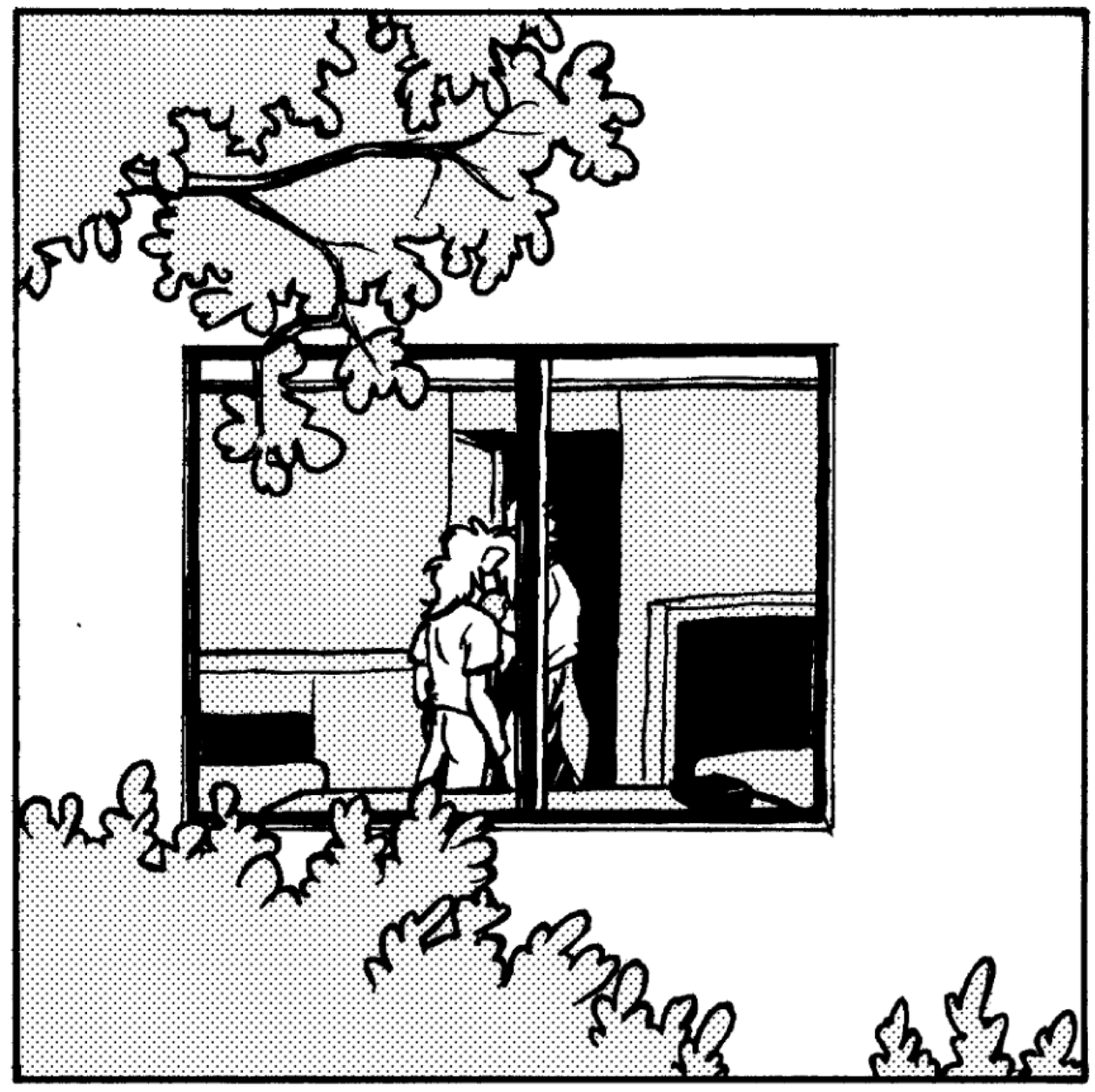

BUT THE FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IS PASS THAT CLASS!

I CAN DO IT.
LELAND
CLASS of 1999
SENIOR BARBECUE

Popular Mechanics
FINAL EXAM:
• closed book
• closed notes
• open mind
• 3 hours
DR. BILL STERN

HOW'D IT GO..?
I ACED IT.
THAT'S GREAT! IT MEANS YOU'RE GRADUATING...
YEAH...
BUT SOMEHOW, I DON'T FEEL LIKE CELEBRATING.





I KNOW JUST HOW YOU FEEL, DANNY.

TO BE CONTINUED...

LETTERS FROM HOME

Dear Mom, College is great! My roommate is weird.
Could you send me some money?

Issue 6 stirred up some interesting mail. Amid curses for the cliffhanger (which wasn't our original intention, honest!), and a couple of "are you SURE priests like this really exist?" (yes, they do), we got a few like this, from David Rust:

I managed to pick up Issue Number Six just prior to DucKon and it had more of a profound effect on me than I would have expected. I've shared my insights with friends both online and off since ASB#6's publication and I thought I'd share those same points here, now.

I found myself oddly compelled by the tragedy that Daniel was going through. In a way, I was envious of him. I've pondered this reaction in myself and have considered the possibility that I'm simply nuts. Rather, as it has been pointed out to me, part of it is that we -as gay and bisexual people- have come to expect blow-ups like those we have seen in ASB #6 and see them as the primary measuring sticks of our dedication to our lives on the fringe. After a fashion, we start to feel cheated if we don't get to play the tormented hero, struggling for our beliefs in the wake of familial, religious and societal homophobia.

From the first time we hear what homosexuality is, we all hear it in the context of the pain it causes and the persecution gay people face. But what happens when that persecution doesn't arrive? Why, when things go well for us, do some of us (at least myself), feel cheated or slighted for not having suffered the pain that we expect to justify our existence?

In my case, I eventually had to realize that it wasn't the confrontation I was lacking but ANY interest in my life from my family. And this was the other point I wanted to raise. How many comic book readers and fans feel marginalized and ignored by those they love and respect? How many wish that they would be taken seriously for their interests only to have them nodded at condescendingly and marginalized? For me, I think that was the other half of my feelings of being cheated at not having had such a "blow-up" with my own family. Not that I didn't get to play the role of the martyr (although I know that such a feeling was part of it), but also because -at this point- I would give anything for my parents to take notice of me and the accomplishments I've made in my life. Perhaps the story taught me more about myself than anything; and thank you for that...

Daniel faced a real outcome; one that is quite common for many young men and women. It was hard to read because I could see the pain that he was going through. On top of that, the introduction of the Priest was very well handled, and fit the pacing of the tale like a glove. I really hope he's right about Daniel's dad's motivations; I really do. But I fear he is not.

Many people act just like Daniel's father and -even with intervention from good people- never reconcile and continue to hurt their offspring through neglect. In a better world, homophobic outbursts could indeed be chalked up to a perceived generation gap, youthful rebellion or a son growing up outside of the control of his father ... I pray for a world where this is so instead of simple disgust and hatred. In the meantime, homophobia in the family is very real and causes more pain than anyone should have to bear. In Issue 6, you have shown that.

Thank you for dealing with it as you have.

You're very welcome.

Writing the Daniel/Marcus/father argument and the priest's counseling scenes was very difficult. As Mr. Rust just mentioned, sometimes an unkind word is less of a hurt than no word at all – something that Daniel has suffered with all his life. Daniel's outburst against his father (and Marcus, who in some ways has assumed some of the duties Daniel's father neglected) had years of hurt all pent up behind it. When the dam broke, the flood was uncontrolled, and it left no heroes, villains, or martyrs in its wake... just destruction. Now it is time to rebuild.

And, from Ryvern McAllister...

Dear Chris and Lance,

ASB is the only "comic book" that I've ever really gotten into. In fact, it's the only comic book I've had the interest to read more than a few pages of. There have been complaints of the story being to predictable. Why? Because it parallels real life so closely. I'm young, younger than your characters, but much like them, I've been dealing with the same things; prejudice and hate, family and friends, acceptance and love.

But this "comic", this story, this work of absolute fiction has helped me deal with my life, because it's one thing to tell a story and then hear someone say, "Oh, yeah. I've dealt with that." It's quite another to listen to a story and think the same thing. It's a much more solid way of knowing that someone's been here. Even more so when I know it's not tailored to me. It's aimed at a lot of people, and ASB seems to hit many in the same way it's hit me, close to home.

I didn't write this just to get my name in there, but I thought you should know.

It worked though... here you are! Thank you. We didn't intend that ASB be "therapeutic" (that would be a supreme arrogance on our part), but the fact that ASB ***has*** *been helpful to our readership, and felt "personal" to some of them, makes it all worth doing.*

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AN ARCLIGHT
PRESS PRODUCTION
in all the world's lands
or heaven's skies above
no candy is as sweet
as simple puppy-love.
VIRUS ONE
BROWN